

LIFE AND CAREER OF  
**REV. FLETCHER THOMAS**  
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF



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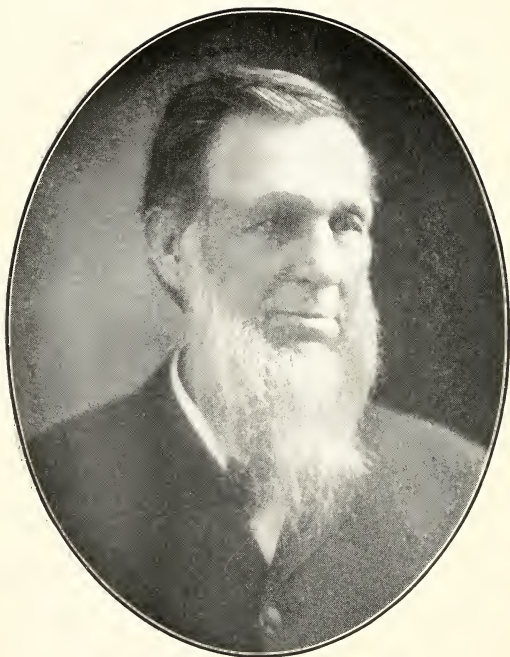


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THOMAS, FLETCHER, 1831-1907.  
A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND  
LABORS OF REV. FLETCHER







REV. FLETCHER THOMAS

A Sketch of the Life and  
Labors of  
Rev. Fletcher Thomas

For Fifty-Seven Years a Minister  
in the United Brethren  
Church

St. Joseph Annual Conference

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**Written by Himself**

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With an Introduction by  
**Bishop N. Castle**



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## Preface

The propriety of publishing a sketch of my ministerial life was suggested to me several years ago by some of my brethren in the ministry and in the laity. Being the oldest minister in the conference save one, Rev. S. W. Wells, after giving the subject much thought in the last two years, I have decided to publish a "sketch of my life," believing that there are many things connected with my long life in revival work which, if put in print, may be a blessing to others when I have passed to the Church triumphant.

It has been with no small degree of hesitancy that I have undertaken a task so laborious and responsible as writing an autobiography extending over a period of nearly seventy-six years, fifty-seven of which have been spent in the ministry. A serious difficulty presented itself at the outset—the absence of any diary, having unfortunately lost my memorandum-book a few years ago on my way to a quarterly meeting. Then, too, our conference record was lost in a fire, or otherwise; therefore I must write largely from memory. To overcome some of the difficulties mentioned, some of my ministerial brethren have assisted me in gathering material. To avoid mistakes I have taken much time, and bestowed great labor upon the work. I congratulate myself on having been able to secure the service of Rev. J. W. Lower, by whom my manuscript has been corrected and typewritten. He has been of great service in securing dates from records in his possession, and from Rev. J. Fetterhoff's diary, through Bishop N. Castle.

With the confident hope that this little volume may be read with interest and profit by some discouraged Christian, or by some young minister whom God has called to the work of the ministry, as well as those with whom I have been associated in the Church, I send it forth on its mission of love, with the prayer that the end at which I have aimed may be reached; namely, the encouragement of believers in the ministry and in the laity, and the winning of souls to Christ.

*F. Thomas*

*North Manchester, Indiana, May 30, 1907.*



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## Introduction

I am invited to a very delicate but withal a very delightful task—the writing of the introduction to the autobiography of Rev. Fletcher Thomas, a member of St. Joseph Annual Conference for the period of fifty-seven years. An acquaintance of over half a century, and membership in the same conference for a like period, lacking one year, have wrought a friendship that is both strong and tender, never having been marred by a word of unkindness or a conscious feeling of variance during all this time.

It is most certainly a pleasure to the wide circle of Christian friends that this well-written sketch of such a long and useful life has been wrought out by the hand of the living thinker himself, and thus made to beat with his own heart-throb, and breathe with his own vitalizing breath, instead of by another's hand when the throbbing heart has ceased its beating, the voice is hushed in the stillness of the grave, and the spirit has gone out into the world beyond.

Nearly two generations have grown up since the ministry of Mr. Thomas began, thus making it cover a great portion of the most interesting period of our Church's history, especially of St. Joseph Annual Conference. It is a little hard to conceive at first thought what such a period of active life means; what active years, of both church and state, this ministry covers. Think of what was and what is: then "Old Glory" had only thirty-one stars in its blue field; now it has forty-five. Then there were only about thirty-one million people; now there are eighty-five million. Then the infant railroads had just commenced creeping towards the great West; now they form a wonderful net-work from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Then Cyrus Field's mighty submarine cable had not borne its first message toward the East; now think of the news it has flashed through thousands of miles of weltering waters, electrifying nations with the intelligence of war and peace, and of "good will to men."

The attitude of human life in this world of such great versatility, where everything seems like the passing of an

evening cloud, or "a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," is worth our careful study. Everything here seems transitory. Paul says, "The fashion of this world passeth away." This statement is well verified by our senses. Whether we look on sleeping lakelets, flowing rivers, vast continents, or into the deep of space where clouds float and stars and suns blaze, we find the law of change ever in operation. Everywhere, on leaf of plant and flower, on solid rock and quaggy moorland, mutation has its inscription. Circumstances of change, decay, and death meet our gaze everywhere. On the earth's surface great rifts, and scars, and congeries of rock tell of the changes that have been wrought on it through centuries. Down deep in its bosom, on solid rock, is legibly written the changes that have occurred there. Once mighty flowing rivers have long since disappeared from their ancient channels. Large tracts of dry land and lofty mountain ranges have been lifted from the ocean's bed; while what was once the highlands are now buried beneath the remorseless waves of the sea.

So with the earth's garniture. How frail, mobile, and vagrant! Nothing seems permanent and changeless. How rapidly the seasons follow each other in their work of desolation, renovation, and renewal.

So with man and his works—his powers, his arts, his civilizations. What is history but a record of the changes that have occurred in the affairs of men in this world, and an effort to preserve what would otherwise pass into utter oblivion? Where would the Nebuchadnezzars, the Cæsars, the Alexanders, and the Napoleons with their kingdoms and their achievements be, but for the work of the historian? They have long since passed from the zenith of their political and military splendor. Their kingdoms have crumbled, their armies have dissolved, and the scepters lie broken at their graves. Where are Babylon, Greece, and Rome? The blackness and darkness of ages cover them. But for the voice of history they would be unheard of and unknown.

Then mark the mutations in the affairs and business relations of men. Property is constantly changing hands. The man that builds does not know who will finally occupy his house. The capitalist of to-day may be the ruined bankrupt of to-morrow. Trade fluctuates like the tides of the ocean.



In the most sacred and purest relations and sources of pleasure that this world affords, the relations of social and domestic life, the springs are not perennial. How soon the happiness of households passes away by the sudden incoming of death! The marriage bell is scarcely silent from its peals of happiness begun, when it tolls out its happiness ended. How suddenly parental hopes are blasted and the heart of the parent crushed by the darkness of an early grave. The very earth is arched with graves, and the solemn floor of the sea holds its millions. From the cradle to the grave is one scene of unceasing changes. This is not only true in the circumstances of life, but it is also true in the individual himself. Once he spake, understood, and thought as a child; but manhood put this all by. A visit to the scenes of childhood, and noting the changes in one's self and in the scenes most familiar, fully verify the apostolic statement. It will be readily noted how things have "fallen into the sear and yellow leaf."

The picture so far held in view is that of unvarying change—passing away. But is there nothing permanent? Is eternal forgetfulness the only end toward which we are tending? Is there not a brighter side to the picture? Is there not something amid this ever-changing scene that is changeless, that shall never pass away? To these questions there is a sure and certain answer. There is an observer of all this versatility, a personality on which is stamped eternal varieties, the soul. It is made the spectator and observer of all these changes, and is therefore led to seek that enduring substance that passeth not away.

In the 26th verse of the 22d Psalm we are taught that the affections are eternal. "Your heart shall live forever." Parallel with this is the 32d verse of the 69th Psalm. "Your heart shall live that seek God." Here we have the absolute indestructibility of character. "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

Man himself is undying. His nature is immortal. He will live on in the invisible during the endless cycles to come. But how beautiful and valuable the perpetuation of a noble life here beyond the years of earthly stay, and thus in a sense overcome and blot out, as nearly as may be possible, the oblivion of the grave. Autograph and photograph albums are valuable in preserving individual features

and symbols of speech; but to "preserve the very life itself, the essence of its goodness and greatness," is far more valuable to the church and the world. To do this is pre-eminently the mission and privilege of the biographer and autobiographer. The cold marble statue, wrought out with the hand, skill, and genius of a very master artist, may adorn the "Silent City," and in symbols speak something of hope and cheerfulness as it catches the eye and rivets the attention of the passer-by; but how much grander and more beautiful the form that lives, and breathes, and acts, than the silent, lifeless statuary.

Here we stand on the shore of this vast, mysterious sea, listening to the swash of the waves as they break all around our island-home. Beneath the billows of this sea lie forms that once adorned and gladdened the home. There are empty chairs in well-nigh every cottage and palace, vacant places at well-nigh every fireside, and graves by every way-side. Death crouches at every door waiting the earliest possible entrance. How many in recent days have laid the bodies of kindred under the green of the grass and the blue of the sky! We kiss somebody's cheek, and breathe to some one a good-by, even when the absence is brief, with a vague fear that all may not be there when we return, if return we may.

It is certainly all praise-worthy, then, that we desire to survive our final hour, and that we want to live in somebody's memory after the last sod has been laid over our coffin, and when the feet of kindred and stranger have turned away as if in utter and final forgetfulness. The hand that has been touched by the chill of death scatters mementos to the living hope of overcoming the forgetfulness of the grave. How we cling to these little memorials in our homes and about us with a tender devotion that is most wise and commendable!

It is not wise to let the good of the past perish. We should build and garnish the sepulchers of the fathers.

We find ourselves instinctively clinging to the past. Who, out among the graves of kindred and stranger, as the evening bells are ringing, can repeat the simple couplet,

"And so 'twill be when I am gone,  
Those evening bells will still ring on,"

and not betray a pensive feeling?

The on-coming years, as their mists thicken around us, make us think of how we may prevent the catastrophe of utter oblivion. Some spend the days of waning strength in fashioning funerals into a fair pageant; and arranging for the most gorgeous and expensive monument that can be raised to their memory. In this connection a very practical question comes: Can we forestall and prevent the forgetfulness of the future? Is there an unfailing way by which one may fix his memory in the affections of the world around him? To these questions there is the most certain and reliable answer: Enthroned Christ where it is his supreme right to reign, in the heart and over the life, and the shock of death and the darkness of the sepulcher can never obscure the brightness of such a life.

Now all these things that I have noted are but preparatory to the main thought that the writer wants to present in this introduction; namely, the importance of putting into some enduring form the valuable things in a life that has been distinguished not only by more than half a century in the Christian ministry, but also by a very successful ministry during this period.

Mr. Fletcher Thomas, whose autobiography is given in this volume, is a man and minister whose career is worthy of careful study, for he is a splendid subject for a rarely interesting biographical narrative.

Mr. Thomas was certainly well born, judging him from his parental blood. Jonathan Thomas, his father, was one of the most distinguished pioneer preachers of Ohio, Indiana, and Southern Michigan. The writer remembers him at the early camp-meetings of over sixty years ago, in the very beginning of things in Northern Indiana. He was a marked figure in his day. He was rather a short, square-built man, with muscles of knotted and braided steel, and a face that told of the invincible, though radiant with expressions of good will, and brotherly kindness. As a preacher he was far above the average for this early time. His voice was one of his chief endowments. It was an orotund, with great carriage and penetration, and it seemed to answer the purpose of his will without an apparent effort. Although of such great compass and power it never grated harshly on the ear of the hearer.

Now, it is but natural that the son should have flowing in his veins some of this distinguished blood. Right generation is a guarantee to timely regeneration, or divine heredity.

Mr. Thomas began his ministry when it meant much to be an itinerant preacher. The work of the ministry of that early day was largely of a frontier character. There were trudging on foot, long rides on horseback, and almost continuous preaching, which largely occurred in private houses, in barns, schoolhouses, public halls, and in open groves. Accommodations were often poor, and sometimes perilous exposures were encountered. There was crowded into these years much of earnest endeavor, heroic struggle, and worthy achievements. The young preacher manfully faced the situation, and early created large expectations of a growing and successful ministry, all of which have been fully verified and realized in maturer years.

In physical build Mr. Thomas is not a large man, and would not be taken for an athlete; but he always had the rush of life in his veins and the flush of health on his cheeks. Seldom in his long ministry has he missed an appointment on account of physical disability. This good health and punctuality added not a little to the pleasure of the people, and to the gracious influence of personal character that lingers to-day in the hearts of thousands of loving admirers, who seem always delighted when his name is spoken or his presence witnessed.

He inherited something of that splendid silver trumpet-like voice that his father had, and, like his father's, it has always served him a good purpose in his evangelistic work. He was always a soul-winner, whether as "circuit-rider," station preacher, or presiding elder on a large district. He had a wonderful passion for souls, and was never happier than when leading men and women to Christ. As a result of this intense longing, thousands will rejoice in the kingdom of glory that they ever came under his ministry.

His creed is short and easily expressed; but is long enough and broad enough to cover the whole field of redemption. Ruin by the fall; redemption by the Cross; regeneration and sanctification through the Holy Spirit express the body, soul, and spirit of his preaching. Absolute, simple, single fidelity to the truth is most characteristic of his whole ministry. Into this fidelity went mind, heart, conscience, will; all there was in him, all there was of him; always, everywhere, he gave himself to the pure, unchanged, unaccommodated New Testament truth. There has never been a tinge of agnosticism, scientific guessing or speculation, or new theological shift or tact in his preaching. It

has always been a plain, simple gospel that appealed to, and won the hearts of the people to Christ. Having joined himself to Christ he stood with him in all the varying vicissitudes of his long ministry. Where Jesus led, there he followed. He took the cross because he had respect to the crown. He was never a mutineer in the moral battle of life. No turn in the road made him falter in following his Leader. His feet never turned aside into by-paths. Being saved himself, he sought to be a savior to others. Every time a reasonably good opportunity afforded he put in a word for Christ and his cause. His stanch character has always stood out square to all winds that blew and currents that flowed. He believes in inspiration; therefore human speculations never disturbed his peace. He believes in the fall and regeneration of man; hence has no room for the evolution of spiritual life from human nature. Just as his decision has been for truth so has been his protest against error. Decision with him has always been a prime virtue.

He is not a product of the schools, but is a friend of the Christian college, and always advocated the cause of education. He believed something ought to be done for Christ at once, and that that something must be within the compass of individual power and opportunities. He believes that education should be to the people and not away from them, and that in that early day, especially, the cause and kingdom of God and the destiny of immortal souls should not wait ten or twelve years on a university training. "Instant in season and out of season" his motto.

But while not educated in the sense of the schools, he has always been scholarly. He seldom violates the rules of grammar either in writing or in speaking. He is a good sermonizer. He learned to preach by preaching itself. This is the best and most effective way to learn the happy art.

Mr. Thomas' services to the Church, and especially to St. Joseph Conference are beyond computation. He has been really identified with the laying of the broader foundation of our Church in Northern Indiana and portions of Southern Michigan. To give a full and minute detail of his life and labors would be to write much of the history of the conference of which he is a member. For this, among other reasons, this autobiography will be of rare interest and of great value to the members, both in the ministry and in the laity of his conference. This interest and value will increase as the years go by and old land-marks vanish. For the

reason that this work will preserve much that will otherwise pass in a very few years into utter obscurity, it ought to have a hearty welcome and a wide circulation. Many of us that have grown old, from whose eyes the old home has long since vanished, have the anxious wish that something had been saved as an heirloom from the devastating hand of time. But it is now forever too late.

Mr. Thomas has been a man of one work, and to that all his time has been conscientiously devoted; namely, to the building up of the kingdom of God in the bounds of his conference; and for this reason he is deserving of highest esteem and the most grateful remembrance upon the part of the thousands among whom he has gone preaching the gospel of the Kingdom.

His life has been a rich benediction to his conference and the Church through all these long years of service, and must continue to be through the untold and unknown ages to come.

He is in a special sense a unique character. Who ever knew of his being impatient, or angry, however great the provocation? Who ever saw anything like a feeling of jealousy displayed when a brother was in the praise of the people? He was one of the readiest and strongest to yield him fullest praise. On these tempermental lines he always seemed to have the guilelessness and innocence of a little child. In the home he is the very embodiment of urbanity, and his family must ever hold his patient, kindly, generous care and solicitude for each member as the richest heritage he could leave them. His own ease and comfort seemed never in mind in his absorbing interest in others. As a husband and father he stands among the foremost as an example of what these relations should mean.

The atmosphere never grew chill, the religious influence never waned in the home. This is one of the strongest and most needed testimonials in our modern church life. The old fashioned family altar, established by our fathers, has lost some of its constant and fervent spirit in these later days. It once was of frequent occurrence that conversions occurred at the family altar; how seldom now. And yet here is where the church began, at the altar established in the home of Abraham. Wherever Abraham pitched his tent, there he built an altar to the Lord. To be the children of Abraham and to be blessed with him, we must walk in his steps.

All this comes, in the case of Mr. Thomas, from that spirit of deep and thorough consecration that has always characterized his ministry. He has always been absorbed in the service of Christ and the work of the church. The passion of his life has always been to promote the cause and kingdom of God. From this he never could be lured. Here he lived and moved and had his being.

Mr. Thomas always insisted on clearness and definiteness in matters of religious experience. Here he would not allow his own feet to tread in any doubtful or uncertain path. He must know. To be able to say: "I know whom I have believed"; "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see," is of great importance in one's religious career. Without this consciousness Christian experience will be unsatisfactory. The strength and courage which the joy of the Lord gives will be wanting. No man can live a victorious, spiritual life, nor can he do his best work in the church, if he is uncertain as to his relation to God.

When Mr. Thomas, about thirty years ago, became convicted for a larger and deeper life in Christ, he rested not until he found it. He so fully surrendered himself to God in separation from the world, and so devoted his whole life to Christ, that he came into the experience of complete deliverance from sin through the cleansing blood, and the fullness of the life of Christ by the inflowing of the Holy Spirit, since which time he has been a firm believer in, and an ardent advocate of sanctification and the life of holiness.

This life, which Mr. Thomas advocates and lives, is not a dreamy, unpractical type of mysticism, such as is found in India, and such as prevailed in the Middle Ages, but a life of truest practical consecration to the highest ideals. He believes in a high type of spirituality, and a complete deliverance from dead formalities, but never deals in acrimonious and vituperative deliverances against those that may not measure up to his ideal of church life. Brotherliness, kindness, and gentleness, characterize his life and ministry.

The character that Mr. Thomas built up and that he has maintained through the long period of his life is perhaps as great a treasure as he could bequeath to his family and to the Church. To have maintained a reputation so blameless, and a character so unspotted, for over one-half a century, is a lesson to the church and to manhood which call for highest admiration and gratitude.

Now, fearing this introduction is growing too prolix, if not too prosy, the writer must end this delightful task, difficult as it is to do. When he remembers the multitude of other lives whose interest in a measure is represented and centered here; that this life will be a cynosure for thousands of eyes and a focus of interest for a whole conference, the temptation to continue is almost overmastering. To linger in this fellowship of the past, amid scenes once so familiar and inviting, is a pleasure beyond expression. Into this rich inheritance of the past, so richly and generously bestowed, the reader of this volume is invited to go.

With us all life is filling up with memories. They are almost, if not quite the largest part of what we keep with us when long years have passed by us. What shall these memories be? Here is a life, the memory of which is worthy to be held in esteem by all, as it will be held in everlasting remembrance in the kingdom of heaven.

“A solemn murmur in the soul  
Tells of the world to be,  
As travelers hear the billows roll  
Before they reach the sea.”



*Philomath, Oregon, June 3, 1907.*



# Life and Labors of Rev. Fletcher Thomas

## CHAPTER I

### ANCESTRY.

Concerning my great grandparents, but little knowledge has been transmitted to me, save that my paternal great grandfather was born in Wales, and came to this country in an early day. My grandfather, Liverton Thomas, was born in Pennsylvania in 1780. My father, Rev. Jonathan Thomas, was born in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania in 1807. His people were large and muscular, and most of them lived to an advanced age. When seventeen years of age, father came with his parents to Wayne County, Ohio, and there in 1825 was united in marriage with Miss Elizabeth Bacon. My father's family consisted of ten children, an account of whom will be given in another chapter.

In 1846, father moved to Steuben County, Indiana, where he remained until the death of my mother in 1863. Father was a minister in the United Brethren Church about sixty years; twenty of which were spent in the "Black Swamps" of Ohio, as they were known in that day. Those were years of unusual toil and suffering, in which his family shared. Impressed with a divine call to the work of the ministry, and moved by love for the souls of men, he waded swamps, swam rivers, slept in the woods, with no pillow save his saddle; often hungry and cold; but he patiently endured all. Hours were spent by himself and devoted Christian wife in prayer for grace to suffer and do the will of Him who called them into the vineyard.

## Life and Labors of

At the time to which reference is now made, he was a member of the Sandusky Annual Conference, but was transferred to the Saint Joseph Annual Conference in the early years of its organization. In the Saint Joseph Conference he served on circuits, missions, and districts, until, by a change in boundary lines in 1853, he became a member of the North Ohio Conference, of which he was a member until death. He possessed unusual physical strength, and an indomitable will. Having the courage of his convictions, he did not hesitate to take a decided stand for the right on all moral questions. As a preacher he was clear and forcible; independent and original in thought, he was fearless and faithful in rebuking sin. Having some of the eccentricities of Peter Cartwright, he often met with opposition; yet, nevertheless, his preaching resulted in the conversion of many of those who became offended. His voice was strong and musical; as a revivalist he was excelled by few, if any. Under his preaching men would fall and cry for mercy. He believed what Jesus taught, that men "must be born again," if they would "see the kingdom of heaven."

Some years ago, while attending a session of the Saint Joseph Conference at North Manchester, Ind., he was taken suddenly ill; it was thought by himself and others that he was near the end of life's journey. He desired to see Bishop Edwards, who was presiding over the Conference. As the bishop approached his bedside, he said, "Uncle Jonathan, do you think your work is done?" He answered: "I think the struggle will soon be over; I shall soon reach home." The bishop said: "To all human appearance you will soon stand before the Master, whom you have served; tell me what gives you the greatest comfort at this moment." After a moment's reflection he said: "Just two things: First, I gave my heart to God at the age of twelve years, and since that time all my poor powers have been given to Christ and perishing men. Second,

I have always declared the whole counsel of God as I comprehended it, without regard to the frowns of men." His sickness at that time was not unto death; God restored him to health, and permitted him to live a number of years in his service.

As a counselor he was safe. He served a number of years as presiding elder in St. Joseph and North Ohio conferences, and represented his conferences a number of times in the General Conference. He was a member of the General Conference that convened at Lebanon, Pennsylvania, in 1869. According to his record, about *seven thousand* souls were converted during the years that he served as pastor, not including those converted under his labors while he served as presiding elder. He received *over five thousand* into the United Brethren Church. While he tenaciously defended what he believed to be right, he was not contentious, always yielding to the counsel of his brethren. He was faithful in whatever relation he sustained to the church. It was not until failing strength rendered it necessary that he asked to be released from the regular work of the ministry, and then by his own request he was appointed "Conference Evangelist." At the advanced age of eighty-nine years and ten months, he departed this life, to live with Jesus, and the spirits of just men made perfect. His death occurred at Hamilton, Steuben County, Indiana, and his remains were laid to rest in the Richland Center cemetery at Richland Center, Indiana.

My maternal grandfather, Henry Bacon, was born in Maryland, and was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, where he imbibed infidel views, which he retained until the closing hours of his life. He was a man of more than ordinary reasoning powers, and, having a good education, he was inclined to read much, to fortify himself in his belief; it was therefore difficult to move him from his infidel doctrine. For a number of years he lived in my

## Life and Labors of

father's home, and although he was not a believer in the authenticity of the Bible, yet he was delighted to know that his daughter (my mother) was a true believer, and true to her profession, and read the Bible, which she believed was the word of God. He was pleased to know that she prayed with her children night and morning. He would often read a chapter for her, when she requested him to do so.

For twenty-five years mother prayed that her father might be convinced of his error, on his death-bed if not sooner. Grandfather would often say, "My daughter, I thank you for the interest you feel in my welfare." Able ministers were brought to labor with him, but seemingly to no purpose. He would say to father: "My son, I am glad to hear you preach, and rejoice in your success; if I believed as you do, I would perhaps be a preacher of the word; but I am honest in my convictions. If you are present when I die, you will see that I will be as composed as any Christian you ever saw die." The last day of his earthly life finally came, and when nearing the end of his life he requested father to be seated on the bed, while mother was kneeling at the foot of the bed, asking the Lord to let her father see his error before he died. Grandfather folded his arms across his breast, closed his eyes, and to all human appearance was dead. As father was about to lay his head on his pillow, he opened his eyes and calmly said to father, "My son, I have just seen what I never saw before." "What have you seen?" said father. Grandfather, lifting his trembling hand, and pointing to the family Bible on the stand, said, "That book! that book! that book! is the word of God." "How do you know?" said father. He replied, "God has just revealed it to me?" And when for the second time it was thought that death had come, he returned to consciousness, and opened his eyes and said, "Yes, yes, I see, I see." "What do you see?" said father. "The rock upon which I have

split; the vicarious atonement." And then very beautifully he explained it. Seven times it was thought he had departed, and each time on reviving he would renounce one point of his infidel notions, finally saying to father: "My son, the gospel you preach is the only hope of the world; preach it while you live. Infidelity has proved my ruin." Father said, "Christ is merciful." "Yes," said he, "but my life should have been given to him." "Ask God for Christ's sake, to forgive you," said father. He sank again into a state of unconsciousness, and on reviving he said, "Yes, I see, he can yet save me if I believe." Finally, lifting his eyes toward heaven he uttered the following prayer, "*God have mercy upon my poor soul.*" Oh! the sincerity of that prayer. He smiled, clapped his hands, and died. The prayer of his daughter was answered. Through the compassion of a compassionate Savior grandfather was at last saved.

My mother, Elizabeth Bacon, was the youngest of four daughters. She was brought under conviction at an early period in life. Her religious advantages were not encouraging; the country being new at that time, there was but little preaching, and Christians were severely persecuted for their religion. In this condition she continued to sorrow over her sins for months, insomuch that life became a burden, and as a result she became melancholy. On one occasion her older sister (afterward the wife of Rev. Joseph Rutter, a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church) said to her, "Sister, what is wrong that you are so sad?" In the bitterness of her soul she exclaimed, "Oh, I am a sinner!" On hearing this, her sister said, "I have been thinking on this myself for a long time." Then and there they covenanted together to seek the Lord until victory came. For days and weeks they wept and prayed, having no one to instruct them. The father becoming alarmed, sent for a doctor, who advised them to call a minister. Accordingly the father consented to take them to a camp-

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meeting about thirty miles distant, at which time and place they were converted. After returning home, Elizabeth and her sister agreed to ask the privilege of having prayer in the home, night and morning. This privilege was denied them for a time, but the father finally consented, on condition that they would not pray for sanctification. The family altar was kept up for weeks, when on one occasion Elizabeth used the word sanctification in her prayer. Grandfather became angry, and forbade them ever to pray in his home again; but the daughters were persistent in their purpose to pray in the home; finally grandfather relented, and prayer was again heard in the home.

The daughters walked a distance of five miles every Sabbath to attend the morning class-meeting. This so displeased their father that when they were preparing for church he would sometimes turn them out of the home shoeless. But they would kneel in the yard and pray for their father, and for themselves, that grace might be given them to endure their trials. Their mother was kind, and would open the door for them. They continued to pray for their parents, and when they would start to church their father would tell them never to come back to his home again; but if they would stay away one night, he would go after them and bring them home. It should be remembered, however, that in other respects he was a kind father. Finally the mother was converted, and the father became more reconciled and willing to grant the daughters religious privileges. In three short years after the mother's conversion she was called to her long home. Just before her departure, she called her husband and children to her bedside, and laying her hand on the heads of her daughters, she thanked God for two praying children; then turning to the father asked him to promise her that he would never again oppose the daughters in their religion; that request was granted. From that time forward

the daughters were encouraged to be firm and true to their profession.

My mother, though uneducated, had a brilliant intellect, but was at times abrupt in speech. With her deep Christian experience and devotion to the cause of her divine Master, she rendered great assistance to her husband in revival work. The laborers being few in those days, and the calls so numerous for laborers to work in the vineyard, she would often travel thirty or forty miles on horseback to meet her husband and assist him in revivals. The country being new, there were many impediments; she would travel through swamps and over muddy roads, and sometimes cross streams where there were no bridges. To aid her in crossing rivers, she would employ a friend to take her across in a boat, leaving the horse to swim across the river. When thus across, she would pursue her journey, and join father in revival work. She was untiring in her efforts for the conversion of her children, asking God that she might remain with her family until they were all converted. That request was granted, with possibly one exception. Having returned to the home from a great revival, in which she labored earnestly, she was suddenly taken sick, and in a short time was called to her heavenly home.

This chapter would not be complete without paying a tribute to the memory of my sainted parents. In that distant time, when the work of the ministry was more difficult, and less remunerative, they had the fortitude and fidelity to go forward as the Lord directed them, and the noble heritage that is ours to enjoy is the fruit of the faithful labors of the pioneer ministers, in which labors my parents willingly, and in a great measure shared. While they received very little compensation for their labors in earthly treasures, they have now entered into their rest, and their works will follow them.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **BROTHERS AND SISTERS.**

The names of my brothers and sisters are respectively as follows:

Enoch and Elizabeth (twins) were born near Findlay, Ohio, in 1826. Being the oldest of the children, they shared in the toils and trials incident to the building up of the home. Elizabeth, especially, assisted in the care of the younger children. She was converted at the age of twelve years, and was a zealous church-worker. At the age of seventeen, she was married to Mr. E. P. Church, who, at the time of their marriage, was not a Christian, but soon after was gloriously saved at a camp-meeting held in Williams County, Ohio, by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Not long after his conversion he became a minister in that church, in which he served for a period of forty years, and was a faithful itinerant. He was thoroughly consecrated and deeply pious. During his ministry hundreds were led to Christ. Finally the Master said, "It is enough, come up higher." He obeyed the summons, leaving a bright testimony to weeping friends that he was going to live with the Master, whom he so faithfully served. His devoted wife, who for long years stood by his side, joining him in revival work, preceded him to the home of the blest, leaving three children, two sons and one daughter, to mourn the loss of an affectionate mother. She was very successful in revival meetings, leading many to Christ, which was a great help to her husband.

Freeman Church, the older son, served four years in the War of the Rebellion as a private soldier, and later as



an officer. He died suddenly in Plymouth, Indiana, in 1906. Chester Church, the younger son, after having graduated at De Pauw University, became a minister of superior talent in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Ina Church, the daughter, became the wife of the Rev. J. A. Beatty, at this time pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Huntington, Indiana.

My brother Enoch, was not converted until about the age of twenty-five years. From a child he had been a subject of earnest prayer. Though a believer in Christianity he was fond of sport, and delighted to sing comic songs and relate mirthful stories, to the delight of the crowd with whom he was associated. He did not seem to be inclined to become a Christian. My mother would often say to my father, "Jonathan, what will become of that boy?" Father would say, "That boy will be all right." But not until the death of Sister Clemenza did he resolve to give his heart to Christ. When sister was told that she could not get well she greatly desired to see Brother Enoch. He was immediately called, and she desired that she might live until his arrival, but it could not be so; she passed away about one hour before his arrival. When he entered the home and looked into her face, pale in death, and was informed of her desire to see him, knowing that it was concerning the interest of his soul that she wished to see him, he was melted into submission, and resolved to give his heart to Christ, and was happily converted. Three weeks from the date of his conversion he preached his first sermon, and soon after was licensed to preach the gospel, and continued faithful in the work of the ministry, until about one year ago, when, at the age of seventy-eight or nine, he retired from the active ministry. God has helped him to lead many souls to Christ.

Salathiel Mark was converted in early life; his life was marked with earnest zeal in the Master's service. He had

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the gift of exhortation, which made him useful as a class-leader, in which position he served eight years or more. At the age of about fifty he was called to leave us. His death occurred at Gladbrook, Iowa, at the home of his brother Enoch.

John Wesley Thomas was a man of more than ordinary physical endurance, and of brilliant intellect. He worked hard to clear and build up his father's farm. Before he had reached the age of twenty he entered college, having but seventy-five cents in money. He paid his board by labor, splitting rails night and morning, usually having paid five dollars in advance for his boarding. About the time of his graduation from the Orland Academy he was converted, and at once it was made known to him that he was called to the work of the ministry. Because of the hardships endured by his father, mother, and their children, in missionary work in the "Black Swamps" of Ohio, he was set against the thought of being a minister, and was not willing to obey his call, and at once resolved to go to California. That was in an early day when it required courage to start on such a long journey overland. Mother said, "My son, why are you going on such a *hazardous* journey?" He replied, "I must do something of the kind or preach the gospel; I am resolved I shall never be a poor itinerant preacher, and be starved as father and his family were."

He went to California, and was there for nine years. He was very successful in gathering the treasures he sought—the gold of that country. He lost his religion, came home, and, at a meeting held soon after, was reclaimed. Again the Lord said to him, "Preach my gospel." He continued to rebel against God. The church granted him license to preach without his request; when it was presented to him by the presiding elder, he opened the stove and committed it to the flames. He said to me, "Fletcher, you will preach and be poor all your days; I

intend to take care of myself; I will support the gospel and help those who do preach." And so he did, liberally. Did he prosper? No. One reverse after another came in his business. Often in revival meetings God would bring before him the worth of immortal souls; then he would bitterly lament that he did not enter the good work. On one occasion he said to me, "Brother, you acted wisely; I acted unwisely. I hope to get to heaven through the mercy and compassion of a loving Savior, but deeply regret that I did not obey the call." Three years ago I was called to his bedside, as he was nearing the close of life. I found him peaceful and full of hope. He said, "All is well; my business is settled; my peace is made and I am going home." He soon left us to dwell on high.

Clemenza was converted in early life, and lived a devoted Christian until death, which occurred at the age of twenty-one. Her death was triumphant and full of hope.

Angeline, my only living sister, resides in North Manchester, Indiana. She was converted in childhood, and united first with the Methodist Episcopal Church, but later in life joined the United Brethren Church. She was united in marriage with John Holt, at Richland Center, Indiana, in the year of 1849. Mr. Holt was an earnest Christian until death, which occurred about six years after their marriage. Her second marriage was to Peter Wagner in 1870. He was a member of the United Brethren Church at North Manchester, where his death occurred in 1903. His death was peaceful. Sister Angeline is an active Christian, and a member of the United Brethren Church of North Manchester, Indiana. She has two daughters, and two sons living, Mrs. Hattie Thomas, and Mrs. Ella Williams, Howard and Clyde Wagner.

Jonathan Russell Bigelow, who was named for the famous Jonathan Russell Bigelow, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He died at the age of four years.

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William Henry was born in Williams County, Ohio, and was educated at Leona, Michigan. He moved to Tama County, Iowa, where he was associated with those who furnished him with infidel literature. He was a great reader and a good thinker. Being afflicted for a number of months with cancer, he had sufficient time to consider, and said no more about his former opinions. On one occasion he said to his brother Enoch, at whose home he died, "It will not be long until we meet again," and soon passed away without a struggle. Professor Williams and others who labored with him, believe that he accepted the Savior.

Henrietta, my youngest sister, was educated at Hillsdale, Michigan, and chose the profession of school teaching. She was a poetess of more than ordinary ability, and was religious from childhood. She was united in marriage with Mr. Frank Payton, of Roanoke, Indiana, and moved to Des Moines, Iowa, where they lived for a number of years and where her death occurred.

## CHAPTER III

## BIRTH, EARLY IMPRESSIONS, AND CONVERSION.

I was born in Hancock County, Ohio, February 8, 1831. My parents dedicated their children to God by baptism in infancy; accordingly I was christened "Fletcher" after the famous John Fletcher, of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The minister by whom I was baptized was a godly man, and, taking me in his arms, he prayed with great tenderness that I might be a minister. That prayer was answered. When I was quite young, father moved to Steuben County, Indiana. The country at that time being new, the society was not all that could have been desired. I was early taught to pray, and to believe that Jesus loved me, and that he died to save me. I distinctly remember on one occasion, as I arose from prayer, of asking my mother how long it would be until I could be a Christian. I was then but a child—four years old. I distinctly remember my good mother's answer; it has never faded from my memory. Said she, "My child, Jesus loves you; you can be a Christian now." She told me the story of Jesus taking little children in his arms and blessing them. This made me glad. At the age of nine years, while attending a revival meeting, I was deeply impressed to go to the altar of prayer. I expressed a desire to go to the altar, and mother said, "Go, my child; God will bless you." I bowed at the altar; mother instructed me how to ask. I accepted of Christ as my Savior; he put his love into my heart, and that enabled *me* to love *him*.

I was a happy boy for about one year, but being brought into contact with wicked associates I was led from the path

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of duty, yet I was regular in attending the services in the house of the Lord. I often remained for the class-meetings. Finally, at the age of sixteen, I attended a meeting conducted by Rev. Samuel Smith, near Richland Center, Steuben County, Indiana. The meeting was held in the home of Rev. Mr. Everhart, a local minister, a man of fine talent and deep piety. I was brought under deep conviction by the earnest appeals of the man of God, who so deeply felt the worth of the souls of his hearers. I shall never forget his burning words and flowing tears. As I stood in the crowd I wondered at the indifference of the people while the minister was so deeply moved with sorrow of heart. A voice said to me, "Where art thou?" In a moment I was moved to tears; I soon felt myself trembling. Mother was kneeling just behind the stove, asking God to save her wandering boy. Oh, the influence of a mother's prayer! I then and there resolved to return, but all my associates being unconverted caused me to halt for a few moments, but finally I decided to go to the altar of prayer. Before reaching the altar, Satan said to me: "You had better go slowly; you have had from a child impressions that your line of life, when converted, would be preaching the gospel." I halted for a moment, and then said, "Cost me what it will, I will give God my heart and live for him, who justly claims my love, my life, my all." Oh, how my mother praised God that her prayers were heard. I went to the altar of prayer a number of evenings, but did not receive the evidence that I sought. I desired that I might be caused to shout aloud; my heart at times was peaceful, but this was not all that I desired. One beautiful morning as I was going to my work, which was that of clearing land, I looked up into the heavens, and said, "I would give the world if I knew I were saved." In an instant, peace, sweet peace, came into my soul; all nature seemed to be changed. The forests appeared more lovely than ever before; the leaves appeared to be tinged





**Rev. Jonathan Thomas**  
At the Age of About Sixty-five Years



with gold. I thought the birds never sang so sweetly as on that morning. The manifestations were not such as I had desired, but a sweet, heavenly calm pervaded my soul. I knew that I was saved. I soon became a member of the United Brethren Church, and for one year served as class-leader with Rev. H. Freeman as pastor.

In this chapter I wish, for the glory of Him who has so wonderfully preserved my life through all these years, to relate some instances of God's protecting care in my early life.

#### PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCES.

First. The country being new, where we lived when I was quite young, our only home was a log house or "cabin." On a certain evening father's sister being sick, my parents went a distance of two miles to her home to spend the evening. The children—five in number—including myself and Brother Enoch, were left at home. Soon after reaching the home of my aunt a feeling of unrest came over my mother; the longer they remained, the stronger the impression that she was needed at home. She finally said to father, "I want to go home." He with others tried to persuade her that it was only a false impression. She remained quiet for a few moments, when, with greater earnestness than before, she insisted that there was something wrong at home. They again reasoned with her, saying, "This sick woman will not, perhaps, live until morning and we should not leave." My mother sat down; but again the impression came that her children were in danger. Suddenly she sprang to her feet and said, "Jonathan, I *must* go home; something is *wrong* at home." Father again attempted to use an argument, but mother started, saying, "No use trying to debate the question; you get home as soon as possible." Mother started immediately, running all the way home, while father and another man were pursuing. When they were in sight of

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home, they saw that the house was on fire, and the children were all fast asleep in bed and could not be aroused to open the door, which father opened by force. Had not my parents returned when they did, doubtless the children would have all perished in the flames. Who will question for a moment the providence in this miraculous deliverance from death?

Second. When I was about twelve years old, my father's home being in Brunersburg, I was engaged to carry shingles to a carpenter on the roof of a four-story tannery. The building was erected on the side of a deep ravine, and close to the building below were logs and rocks. Sometimes, instead of walking on the rafters, to shorten the distance, I would walk on the newly-laid roof. Mr. Zellars, the carpenter, warned me of the danger of doing so. I repeated it, when finally, just as I came near him, my feet slipped and he caught me, which saved me from being crushed on the rocks below.

Third. In the forests of Steuben County, Indiana, where I lived when a young man, there was no scarcity of game of almost any kind. I took great delight in hunting, especially in hunting coon. To save the labor of chopping trees, I would often climb the tree and chase the game down. On one occasion my dog treed a coon on one of those very tall hickory-elm trees. The coon occupied a place on a limb, in the top of the tree, extending out from the trunk. I climbed the tree, eighty feet or more from the ground. Not being able to drive the coon from his place, I presumptuously went out on the limb, when it partially broke loose from the tree. I called to my brother, who was standing on the ground, to get out of the way. Fortunately the branch caught on limbs below, and, being self-possessed, I managed to get back to the body of the tree and climb down to the ground. I was willing to go home without the game. From that time I have not been able to ascend very far from the earth.

Fourth. When a boy I followed breaking wild colts; one night I mounted a wild animal and rode eight miles to call a doctor to see a farmer. The weather was quite cold, and, not realizing that I was chilled, when I arrived at the doctor's gate I undertook to dismount, and in doing so I fell to the ground with one foot fast in the stirrup. I saw my danger, and spoke gently to the frightened animal; but just as I was about to take hold of the rein of the bridle the horse started to run, and ran three times around in a circle, kicking furiously, and my foot still fast in the stirrup. I should have been dashed against a large stump had not my foot been released. The horse ran up to the gate, and after talking to him gently, I finally managed to seize the rein. When the danger was all over, I became so weak that I could not stand. These four deliverances I have ever remembered.

During my boyhood days, at about the age of fourteen, I attended a district school near Richland Center, Steuben County, Indiana, taught by Jane Trowbridge, who afterward became the wife of Rev. Cyrus Lawrence, brother of Rev. John Lawrence, the church historian, and at one time the editor of the *Religious Telescope*. Cyrus Lawrence, for a number of years, was an itinerant minister of the United Brethren Church, in the North Ohio Conference. His death occurred in 1869. In 1880 Mrs. Lawrence was married to Robert Speer, whose death occurred in 1890. Mrs. Speer is now living near Frankfort, Indiana; she is in her eighty-first year, hopeful in the Lord.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **CALL TO THE MINISTRY AND LICENSED TO PREACH.**

My impressions to preach the gospel date back to my childhood. As I advanced in years these impressions became stronger; I would talk and dream about preaching; would often exhort when walking along the road. Sometimes I would take my stand upon a log in the forest and preach to the trees. When I would hear those old-time sermons, preached by my father and others, I longed for the time to come when I might be able to preach the gospel to lost men. I would often assemble the boys and hold what I called "revival meetings." Finally the time came when I felt that I must go into the work, but at that time I was greatly afflicted, the nature of which physicians did not understand. When I made known my purpose to my father, he said, "Unless you recover from your affliction you cannot succeed." I replied: "Father, God wants me to warn men to flee from the wrath to come; it is my business to go, and God's business to give me the strength."

In my nineteenth year I was given license to preach, by the quarterly conference, held four miles north of Waterloo, Dekalb County, Indiana, E. H. Lamb, presiding elder. One week from the time I received my license to preach it was appointed that I should preach at the same place where my license was given, about sixteen miles from my home. I arrived at the place in good time on Sabbath morning, and thought that I had my discourse well in hand; about one-half hour before the time for preaching it became very dark, and my discourse left me. The time having arrived for preaching, after singing and prayer, I arose and announced the following text,

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Rev. 2:10. I tried to say something by way of explanation concerning my text, but everything that I had thought to say had left me. I found that all that I could do was to throw up my hands and surrender; father had often told me that when I had nothing to say I should keep quiet. I then turned the service over to the class-leader, saying, “You will take charge of the services.” The brethren felt sorry for me, and at the same time were amused. They held a short service, but I knew very little of what was said or done, and was greatly relieved when the whole affair was over. It would have been a great relief to me if I could have placed myself back where I was in the morning before I started to the appointment where the terrible calamity had overtaken me.

The devil told me that God had not called me to the ministry, and that I had better go home, and not try again. In the evening of the same day, having an appointment three miles distant, and some of the members from that place being in the morning service, I was sorely tempted to return home without filling the appointment, and abandon the thought of ever being a minister. I finally decided to make another effort, but did not know what I should say. The congregation was large, and the singing was inspiring. I chose for my theme, “Religion.” I was greatly blessed in talking to the people. We had a profitable service; the brethren spoke encouragingly to me. During the following winter I assisted my father and other ministers in revival work, and many were saved.

#### SORE BUT PROFITABLE TRIAL.

My mother being ill, my father could not go to his quarterly meeting three miles north of Jackson, Michigan, and I was sent to inform the presiding elder, J. C. Bright, and fill some appointments for father. I remained after the quarterly meeting to conduct a revival service, and a great

awakening among the people followed; a large number were saved. Among the number converted was a young lady, a teacher in the public schools. She was of a wealthy, but skeptical family. Her parents were greatly displeased on account of her profession of religion, and bitterly opposed her. I visited the family, and sought to win the parents to the church; I succeeded in gaining their respect; they treated me kindly, and through respect for me they did not oppose the daughter in attending church. I was invited to share the hospitality of the home during the meeting, which invitation I accepted.

Notwithstanding the fact that God was greatly blessing my feeble efforts, a terrible temptation soon came to abandon the ministry and go to work on father's farm and seek temporal prosperity. I had no sooner determined to abandon the thought of preaching when God laid upon me the hand of affliction. Medical aid was secured; the physician did all in his power. I was seventy-five miles from home, but forbade them to inform my parents of my affliction. Every day I grew apparently worse, and the doctor was unable to fully diagnose my case, and finally said he could do no more for me. I despaired of life. In that condition I seriously reflected, for my way was not clear. I asked the Lord the cause of the darkness that surrounded me. I distinctly heard a voice saying: "Take back what you have said. Will you preach my word?" I had a wonderful struggle, but finally I yielded and said, "Lord, I will obey." In a moment the cloud was removed, and light beamed into my heart, and all was peaceful. This was Thursday. I no longer needed a doctor, and on the next Sabbath I was in the pulpit; God wonderfully inspired me in speaking to the people. I became so enthusiastic that a good brother in the congregation arose and said, "Brother, you must not continue longer; remember you are weak in body." I continued a few moments, then closed the service. I was not sick;

God laid his hand upon me to keep me in the ministry. Oh! how I praise him for dealing so tenderly with me.

This chastisement I will never forget. My kind Heavenly Father intended it as a blessing in disguise. The family to which reference was made, treated me very kindly; my own mother could not have treated me more kindly than the mother of the young lady to whom I referred. For all of their kindness and hospitality they would accept no pay. In after years my mother called upon the family to thank them for the kindness they had shown me. The young lady lived a devoted Christian life, and through her influence many of her pupils were led to Christ and became useful Christians. Her brother continued to oppose her, and the most ingenious schemes were resorted to, to lead her away from the Savior. On one occasion her brother requested her to accompany him to a revival service, some six miles from their home; on their way he expressed a desire to stop at the home of a friend, but the deception was soon discovered. Arrangements had been made for a dance in that home, and she was invited to participate. At first she declined, but after much persuasion she consented to participate in the dance. Just as she took her place on the floor, she fainted, and the program for the evening was not followed. The opposition of her friends did not cease; on another occasion, when she was on her way to church, she was compelled to hear the most profane language from her only brother. Without a murmur she endured it all. While in the service that evening she was suddenly taken ill; for a time it was thought that she would not recover; calling for her Bible, she desired that it be placed under her pillow when dying. Turning to her mother and brother she said, "In our social relations you have always been kind to me, but in regard to the interests of my soul you have been very unkind." Her sickness at that time was not unto death; God permitted her to live and labor in his vineyard.

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At the age of twenty years, in 1851, I attended an annual conference at North Manchester, Indiana, D. Edwards presiding. Here I met for the first time H. A. Snapp, who at this session became a member of the annual conference. There being no railroads leading to the conference, we traveled on horseback. The first night we tarried with Father Tulley, a devoted Christian, and a member of the United Brethren Church, and long since gone to his reward. I left an appointment to be filled on my return from the conference. Bishop Edwards accompanying us, we arrived at the home of Brother Tulley in good time. I said to Bishop Edwards, "I have an appointment here this evening, and, as the people have never heard you preach, you ought to deliver the message." He kindly consented. Just as we were starting to the church it commenced raining; I said, "Bishop, I fear we shall have a rainy evening, which will cause the congregation to be small." He replied, "It does not make any difference." I asked, "Can you preach as well to a small congregation?" "Oh, yes; just the same." I said, "It always embarrasses me if there are but few present." "Yes, I suppose so; it was so with me when I was young and vain, and thought I knew a great deal; I wanted a great many to hear me; but since I have learned that I know but little, I am content to preach to a few." At another time when he was to preach at Hamilton, on Sabbath morning, it had the appearance of rain. I said to him, "I fear we shall have a rainy day." He replied, "Brother Thomas, you will do well to attend to your own business." I had learned that Bishop Edwards was a master-hand at training young preachers, but really I did not admire his method of doing it; it seemed a little unkind, but the lesson has been helpful to me all through life.

Twenty-five years later, in my own home I called his attention to the two incidents; they had passed from his mind. Laughingly he said, "I suppose it was needful."



Soon after the annual conference at North Manchester, I was requested by the presiding elder, E. H. Lamb, to assist the pastor on what was then known as the St. Joseph Circuit, what is now known as Bremen Station was included in that circuit, the preaching being on the north side of the village.

#### A NOVEL INCIDENT.

The first appointment I reached was Bremen, then known as the Yockey appointment. The first man I met was an old sinner; I inquired if there was any preaching in that place. He said: "There have been three men preaching in the community; one by the name of E. H. Lamb, who is a *gentleman*; another by the name of F. L. Forbes, he is a *fool*; and another by the name of J. Thomas, he is a *blackguard*." I went to the schoolhouse, and left an appointment for the evening; I was met by a large audience. My old informant was there, and learned that J. Thomas and the young preacher were closely related. I felt, as the community was very wicked, that the thing to do was to engage in a revival meeting, which continued for two weeks. Twenty were converted and received into the Church. The minister appointed to this work by the annual conference had not yet arrived on the charge. The first quarterly conference being soon after the revival, I remained, and soon learned that the pastor was greatly displeased that I had been sent to assist him on the charge. This so displeased the members of the quarterly conference that they requested that the young preacher be retained on the charge alone; this of course could not be; I positively declined to remain on the charge. The work greatly suffered from lack of piety on the part of the minister, and was left without a pastor within a few months.

## CHAPTER V

### EVANGELISTIC WORK.

Having decided not to remain longer on the St. Joseph charge, I resolved to hunt up destitute communities and preach to the people; in this work I was greatly blessed. I succeeded in organizing a number of good societies, which were placed under the care of adjoining charges. I remember to have visited a small village, destitute of religious influence; but few attended church, and leading men of the town believed in the "unconditional salvation of all men." To secure a congregation I used a little strategy. Unobserved by the people, as I passed different places, I posted up notices, that at a certain time a gentleman from the State of Ohio would preach in the school-house on the subject, "The Unconditional Salvation of All Men," or what is commonly called "Universalism." When the time arrived I was there as announced; the house was filled to its utmost capacity, and being seated in the congregation, the people were not aware that the speaker had arrived, and they became restless; the general impression was that they were "sold." When the hour arrived I arose and went forward, stating, "I am the man who made the appointment for this hour, and by your indulgence, I will now discuss the subject announced." I selected the following text, "Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." 1 Tim. 4:10. I stated:

1. That Adam, our federal head, was to keep the law of innocence, but failing to do so, and violating the moral law, he fell, and with him the whole human race,

as is set forth in Rom. 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

2. We had life in the federal head, but lost it by his voluntary act; we were not active in the transgression, only passive; did not deserve actual punishment. But being passive in the transgression, we must be passive in the suffering. The divine law had been violated, satisfaction must be made by the offender, or by substitution. Hence it is written, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

3. Christ, the second Adam, came and took the place of the first Adam; undertook to keep the law for us, which the first Adam failed to keep. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He went to the cross and rendered satisfaction to the law, suffering the just for the unjust; hence, said John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"; the *Adamic sin* that involved the world.

4. The Adamic sin which involved the world was removed by the death of Christ on the cross, but we suffer the effect produced by the fall; that is, a corrupt, sinful nature. For this, infants are not responsible; hence the race before reaching accountability is held in a state of innocence, and all who die in that state are saved. Those who, after reaching accountability, transgress the divine law are saved only through faith in Jesus Christ; hence the language of Jesus, "It behooved Christ to suffer and to die and rise the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

The result of this meeting was most satisfactory. I followed with a series of meetings which resulted in the salvation of many precious souls, and the organization of a good society.

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I made my home with Father Sperow, who resided near the town of Appelmanburg, Indiana. He had a large family, none of whom were religious at that time. I could not have been treated more kindly in my own father's home.

### A STRANGE INCIDENT.

As I was passing the community in which Father Sperow lived, I saw a man seated on the fence; I bade him good-morning, and rode on a short distance and then turned and said to him, "Are you a Christian?" "No," was the reply. I said, "You should attend to the interests of your soul at once; you may have but a short time to live." I then rode away. He did not know me, but became very much alarmed, and went to his home and related to his wife what a strange young man had said to him, as he was passing that forenoon. He was interested to know who the young man was, where he was going, and why he addressed him as he did. During a revival meeting which followed, he gave his heart to Christ.

### A SKEPTIC SURPRISED.

There resided in this community a doctor who professed to be an infidel. He was in the habit of inviting ministers to his home for the purpose of holding an argument with them. On a certain occasion, Bishop Edwards came into that community, and inquired of the doctor for the home of Father Sperow. This led the doctor, whose name was House, to conclude that the stranger was a minister in the United Brethren Church, and asked the bishop if he were not a minister in that Church. "I am," was the bishop's reply. Said the doctor, "It is late; you stop with me for the night, and I will make it pleasant and interesting for you, and in the morning I will take you to the home of Father Sperow." The bishop consented. The doctor introduced the bishop to Mrs. House, who was an intelligent lady. After refreshments were served and they

were seated in the parlor for an evening conversation the doctor introduced his objections to the Bible. Had he known who his guest was, he might have felt his way more carefully. The bishop made no reply to his criticism, which led the doctor to conclude that he had a very easy subject, and of course would have a good time, which would well reward him for the stranger's lodging. The doctor's wife, who was well educated, listened with intense anxiety, fearing that the stranger would not be able to defend the Bible she loved so well. As the doctor continued his attacks upon the Bible, the bishop still remained quiet. Finally the doctor said, "Stranger, what do you think of these objections; are they well taken?" The bishop replied: "You are a *criminally ignorant man*: you have never read the Bible; you do not understand how ridiculous you appear in the eyes of a sensible man." The bishop handled the doctor to the delight of Mrs. House. The doctor was not permitted to know who his guest was until he conveyed him to the home of Father Sperow, where he learned that he had entertained Bishop Edwards. The bishop remained over Sabbath and preached morning and evening. The sermon on Sabbath morning was on the authenticity of the Scriptures; in the evening on the "vicarious atonement." Under these sermons the doctor was made to weep, and said to me some years later, "How ridiculous I must have appeared in the eyes of such a man as that."

Soon after this I held a meeting in that community which continued for over five weeks. The people being wicked, there were many hindrances, but, notwithstanding the fact that I was young, I had had some experience in revival work, and being inspired by the Holy Spirit I entered into the work, looking to God for victory. The Holy Spirit was present to convict sinners and save penitent souls. Dr. House, to whom reference has been made, attended the meeting, and was deeply convicted; on Saturday evening

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he was standing near the altar weeping. I said to him, "Doctor, do you not feel that you ought to be a Christian?" In order to evade my question, he said with an oath, "I do not propose to make a fool of myself by getting down at that altar." Placing my hand on his shoulder, I said: "Doctor, you are the biggest fool I ever saw; you are the devil's fool; more, you are a *fool devil*." Had he not been deeply convicted he would have become angry. Despite his effort to throw off conviction, his tears flowed freely.

The next day was Sabbath, I had already sent for my father and mother to assist me, but up to this time I knew not that they had arrived. As I came near the church on Sabbath morning, I saw that an immense congregation had gathered. I had already preached all I knew. I entered the church tremblingly, but, to my joy, father was already in the pulpit and ready to preach. I said, "Father, give them the old gospel to-day." Many of God's people wept; others were angry. The congregation for the evening service was large; the text was, "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Oh, what a sermon! In speaking of the degrading tendency of sin, the preacher said, "I have been all through Jackson penitentiary." A tough cried out, "I have no doubt of that." The preacher replied, "You poor, disgraceful wretch, I never had the key turned on me as you did." Things looked a little forbidding for a time, but the altar was soon crowded. Dr. House was standing near the altar weeping and trembling. I first thought I would extend to him my hand and invite him to the altar; then I thought as the Holy Spirit had him in hand, I would not interfere. Just then he fell down at the altar; his tears flowed like rain. He confessed the sins of his life, in regular order as he could call them up; lastly he told the Lord how he had discouraged his devoted Christian wife in her religious life, and asked to be forgiven. Then he arose and asked his wife and the

people present to forgive him. Just then light came to him, and he gave God the glory.

SAVED BY GRACE.

There was another incident connected with that revival that is worthy of mention. An amiable young lady of a respectable family attended the meetings without manifesting the slightest interest in the welfare of her soul until near the close of the meeting. Her parents became very much alarmed, she being the only one unconverted. They said to me, "Brother Thomas, we are alarmed about our daughter, and desire that you call on her, and make a personal effort for her salvation." I said, "Certainly." I called upon her at her father's home. I said to her: "Miss Deal, I have called to have a conversation with you about the interests of your soul; will you be so kind as to give me your attention for a few moments?" The request was cheerfully granted. I spoke to her concerning the necessity of a change of heart; how terrible it would be to die without a hope in Jesus. I entreated with tears that she yield to Christ at once, and then bowed in prayer. At the close of the prayer I said, "Catherine, will you be saved to-night?" She answered: "I truly thank you, Mr. Thomas, for the interest you manifest in my welfare; I appreciate all you have said, but must say to you I feel no personal interest in this matter. On your account I am sorry." I bade her good-day. She was in the evening service as usual, manifesting no interest in her salvation. During the services that evening, the impression suddenly came to me that there were persons in that congregation who would soon be in eternity, and if not saved in that meeting, would never be saved. Instinctively I arose and said, "There are persons in this congregation who will soon die; and, if not saved in this meeting, will be lost through all eternity." The meeting was to close the following evening. The next morning Father Deal came to me again and

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urged that I make another effort for Catherine's salvation, saying: "She must be saved now, or it will be forever too late; go in the name of Jesus." I called again at her home, and said: "Catherine, I am here again in the interest of your soul; will you be seated in the parlor a few moments?" "Certainly," was the reply. She listened to all that I had to say. I asked the Savior to help me; I know he did. I said to her, "Will you bow with me in prayer." I asked the Lord to send the Holy Spirit to awaken her. On leaving the home I said: "Catherine, what will you do? you must and will decide this question." Again she replied, "I thank you, but am sorry to say that I feel no interest in the things of which you have spoken." I left her with a sad heart. That night she was in the service again; the meeting was one of unusual interest. As I was concluding the sermon, for the first time I saw her weeping. I asked the Lord to conquer her will. When I closed the sermon I went to her and said, "Catherine, will you be saved?" "I will," was her reply. I led her to the altar of prayer. Oh, how she surrendered! and while looking up through her tears she said, "Jesus, save me; I will be thine forever." The Spirit whispered, "Peace, be still." Her fears were quieted; joy filled her soul, and she shouted, "Glory! Jesus is mine and I am his." The parents, brothers, and sisters, and the people of God rejoiced and gave God the glory. I believe angels rejoiced in heaven. As I retired that night, great peace came to my heart.

I left the community to engage in another meeting, to return in three weeks; on my return I learned that four persons had died who attended the revival meeting. Two of them lamenting that they had not accepted Christ during the meeting. A messenger was in waiting for me to visit Catherine Deal, by her request, as she was about to die. As I entered the room where she was lying, she beckoned me to come near her, as I leaned forward to listen to what she might wish to say, she whispered, "Sinner saved





Rev. Fletcher Thomas  
At the Age of Twenty-five



by grace." God gave her strength to speak audibly. Oh, how she praised God that he had used me to bring her to the cross. Calling her friends around her, she said, "A brand snatched from the burning"; then repeating, "A sinner saved by grace." Bidding all farewell, she closed her eyes to open them in heaven.

FATHER SPEROW'S TEMPTATION.

I shall never forget the kindness I received during the time that I made my home with Father Sperow, a good Christian man. He held license to exhort, and in that relation, he was very useful. He worked hard, planned well, and gave liberally to the cause of Christ, and prospered financially. It was not long, however, until he suffered a reverse of fortune. Disease came among his stock, and he suffered heavily. He had gathered his large crop, and soon after his new barn was struck by lightning, and all was consumed. After this I went to his home; he met me at the gate, extending his hand, while tears came to his eyes, he said: "Brother Thomas, I am sorely tempted; it does seem that God deals harshly with me; many of my neighbors are wicked; yet they prosper. I have tried to do right, and to honor God with my means; yet all I have is being taken away." I said, "In the future you may see the goodness of God in that which now seems to be a calamity." Twenty-five years later I called at that home; I met Father Sperow at the same gateway. He said: "I am so delighted to meet you again, and to say to you that I am glad my cattle, hogs, and horses died; I am glad my barn burned, that God dealt with me as he did; to-day I am a better man; I am prosperous and happy. I have enough and to spare. I believe I should have backslidden; the world had stolen a march upon me; I had allowed the family altar largely to go down; my misfortune was a blessing in disguise." I visited this old saint many times afterward, and always found him cheerful and happy. At

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his request I promised to preach his funeral, should I be living at the time of his death. In 1897 he fell asleep in Jesus, and I fulfilled my promise.

## CHAPTER VI

## RECEIVED INTO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

In 1853, at the age of twenty-two, I was received into the St. Joseph Annual Conference, which held its session that year in the barn of Brother Livengood at Pleasant Plain, near Elkhart, Indiana. Dr. L. Davis was the presiding bishop, and signed my annual conference license to preach. The conference at that time was comparatively small, and composed of earnest, self-sacrificing men, among whom were J. Thomas, J. M. Hershey, H. A. Snepp, John Surran, J. B. Slight, H. Freeman, S. W. Wells, F. L. Forbes, J. S. Todd, Eli Hoover, S. Surfase, J. M. Hyker, R. Baker, J. Peffler, E. H. Lamb, J. Lamb, H. Tuck, E. Johnson, S. Chapman, J. Terrell. All of the above have gone to their reward save S. W. Well, of Silver Lake, Indiana.

At this annual conference I was appointed to the Silver Creek Circuit, one hundred miles distant in Berrien County, Michigan. There being no railroads, and having no conveyance, I walked the entire distance, save four miles, in two days and three-fourths. On my way I found many kind friends. I remember to have called at a farm-house for dinner. Before leaving, having settled for my dinner, I said to the gentleman of the house, "If it will be agreeable with you I will pray with you before I leave." He looked at me with a little surprise and said, "You are at liberty to do so." We bowed in prayer. I asked the Lord to bless the parents and children. This service was blessed to their good. I left the parents weeping; they asked me to call again.

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The third day I reached my charge. I stopped at the home of a brother by name of Bilderback, a good Christian man. On Sabbath morning I was greeted by a large and appreciative congregation. There was a local preacher in the congregation who was present at the annual conference when I was appointed to the charge, who looked at me with an air of contempt, and when he went home published to the charge that the conference had sent them "a green boy for their preacher." At the close of the service that morning he came to me with smiles and words of cheer. He went with me to my afternoon and evening appointments. I had a blessed day; I sang some spiritual songs at each appointment which I think were appreciated. My local brother became my true friend and helper. Silver Creek charge was composed of five classes, and one additional appointment, which was in a very wicked neighborhood. The people were intelligent and respectful in the public service, but, having so long rejected the counsel of the Lord, it was called the "Lost Corner." Ministers had so often tried to bring about a reformation, to no effect, that the place was largely abandoned. I was advised not to preach to them, and thought that I would not, but, as I was passing the schoolhouse, I was strangely impressed that I should leave an appointment; and seeing a man near by at work, I called to him and said, "Have you preaching in your community?" "Not often," was his reply; "once in a while some fellow takes pity on us and gives us a talk." I said, "Do you desire preaching?" He said, "We always turn out when we have preaching." "Well," I said, "I am told that you are notoriously tough; you have horse-racing, shooting-matches on the Sabbath, and carry on all kinds of devilment, and that you glory in your obstinacy." He replied, "We consider that we are rather a nice class of people." I asked, "Will you circulate an appointment for a stranger on next Wednesday evening?" "Certainly," was his reply.

When I went to that place I was met by a very large and attentive congregation. At the close of my discourse I said: "I have been sent to this charge by the conference to preach for this people; if you desire me to preach for you, you will manifest it by standing." All at once arose. In two weeks from that time I commenced a revival meeting. To this some were opposed, but did not wish to have it known that such was the case, and to forestall the meeting circulated the report that smallpox had broken out in a town about eight miles distant, and the meeting should not be held. I said to them: "You consented to have me preach in this house; I see there is opposition to save souls; so I will not leave another appointment." They urged that I continue to preach for them at least occasionally; I refused; but afterward said to Brother Willis, a member of the Methodist Church, "I intended to return, but did not wish them to know it." In a few weeks they requested the above named brother to prevail on me to preach for them again. I sent an appointment for the next Wednesday evening. The house was crowded; at the close of the service I said: "I will be in the community at least two days; if you will come out I will preach to you on tomorrow evening."

The congregation on the following evening was a large and attentive one. I then announced an appointment for the next evening; had a good service, and I then said: "I am going some miles south; on my return Saturday I will preach for you in the evening." The house was full. At the close of the service I said, "As I have no appointment for Sabbath morning and evening, I will preach for you." By this time they suspected my purpose to hold a meeting. The Lord was present at every service. By the middle of the week the Spirit moved mightily among the people; hence Satan began to muster his forces. There were several infidels in that community who

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set up their opposition; but the Lord was with us, and the good work went forward. There were several men in that place whose influence it was necessary to overcome; I resolved to do personal work. I first called on Father Easton, an old citizen having a large family, all unconverted. I presented to him the interest of his soul, and the claims that God and his family had upon him. He wept bitterly, but made many excuses. I prayed with him and urged him to attend the evening service, which he did. My text was Luke 14:18, "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." God blessed the truth to the awakening of the old man, who at the close of the discourse arose and removed his overcoat. When the invitation was given to come to the altar he walked forward and stood at the altar. I said to him, "What is your purpose?" "I propose to become a Christian," said he. I said to him, "You have several children here, like yourself, unsaved; ask them to join you in this work." He at once said, "Children, I have never given you the example of prayer; will you join your father in seeking the Lord?" They all at once—seven in number—as I recall it, arose and came to the altar, and many others followed, until the altar was crowded. This was a meeting of power. Satan for a time seemed to be conquered, but he soon rallied his forces.

There were a number of skeptics in the community, and they at once sent for a Mormon preacher. The meeting being held in a schoolhouse, he made an appointment for Friday evening in the midst of our meeting. I then announced my meeting for Saturday evening and over the Sabbath. My meeting for Friday evening was held at the home of Father Easton, leaving the Mormon about twelve persons to hear him preach. The Holy Spirit was present in my meeting, and eight persons were saved. The infidel crowd resorted to strategy; they announced an



appointment for Monday evening in advance, fearing that I would again draw the congregation away from them. The report went out on Sabbath that the Mormon would not fill his appointments; I inquired whether the house would be occupied on Monday evening. They said, "We are informed that the appointment is withdrawn"; therefore I left an appointment for Monday evening; but soon learned that the Mormon was coming to fill his appointment, and the word went out that there would be a discussion. This brought a large congregation. During the day I secured the dwelling of Mr. Willson, an unconverted man, in the event that I should be interrupted. When I came to the schoolhouse early in the evening the house was filled to its utmost capacity, and as many on the outside. A new set of hands were in charge of the lights. As I entered the house I saw that the pulpit was occupied by the Mormon; I walked within a few feet of the stand, and halted. He beckoned to me to come where he was, but I refused, and he then came to me, and invited me to be seated in the stand with him. He said, "I will preach a short discourse and you can reply." I answered, "You will not preach to this congregation to-night." He insisted that he would, and if he did not teach correctly, I could correct him. I said: "I will have no controversy with you to-night; if you were a gentleman, much less a Christian, you would not be here interfering with the Lord's work. You are a child of the devil, and doing his bidding." I then arose and said to the people: "You granted me this house in which to preach; the devil has sent this man here to stop the good work. All who wish to attend my services will repair to the home of Mr. Willson." We left him with a congregation of twenty-two persons. I said to the brethren on the way to Mr. Willson's, "The Lord will not allow that man to speak to-night." So it was; he made the attempt, but could not speak, and asked to be excused. "For some reason,"

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said he, "I cannot speak to-night." All his congregation, save the family with which he lodged, came to our service after his service closed; nine souls were converted that night in our meeting. I then announced that my services would continue indefinitely.

### SOME STRIKING CASES OF CONVICTION AND CONVERSION.

On Friday evening the Holy Spirit was present to convict the unsaved; among the convicted were a mother and her two daughters; the husband and father was a very wicked man. I urged the mother and daughters to come to the Savior; they doubtless would have done so had it not been for the father, who took his stand between them and the altar, as they thought to hinder them if they would attempt to get to the altar. They wept and trembled, but did not yield. I bowed in prayer, and mentioned the hostility of the father who was intimidating his family; I asked the Lord to convict and save him, if he could be saved; if not, to take him out of the way. He went home in anger, declaring that he would not hear me preach again. He was soon brought under such deep conviction that he could scarcely eat or sleep for three days; he tried to haul a load of wood, but did not succeed. He sent for different Christian men that he might talk with them, but found no relief. He was advised to send for me, but declared he would not; however, on Sabbath morning he consented to send for me. I at once went; he insisted that I recall the prayer that I had offered concerning him. I said: "I cannot. You get out of the way of your wife and daughter and give God your heart." He claimed that he did not oppose his family; I replied, "I will leave it to your wife and daughters." They at once withdrew from the room. I arose to leave; he urged that I do not go. I said, "I will not talk to an angry man in his own house." He insisted that I take back the prayer. I again affirmed that I would not; and said to him, "Give your heart to Christ, and all

will be well; if you do not you will be eternally lost." I left him begging me to recall the prayer. I went to the morning service; the congregation was large. Oh! what a meeting; the Holy Spirit was poured upon the congregation; saints shouted and sinners wept. For one week the altar was crowded with penitent souls, but not one was converted that week. I appointed a day of fasting and prayer; the day was spent in religious service; Christians came for five and six miles around. In the evening the altar was again crowded; fourteen were converted during this service. What a victory! One of those infidels said: "That boy preacher has made fools of the people; he is the longest-bitted little devil I ever saw; he fights better on a retreat than in a standing battle." The meeting resulted in the conversion of fifty-five or more, the organization of a good class, and the erection of a house of worship. There is yet a good flourishing society in that place, with a modern house of worship erected within the last two years.

#### MY FIRST PRESIDING ELDER.

Rev. J. S. Todd was my first presiding elder; he was an eloquent preacher. I greatly appreciated him and his pulpit efforts. I did not, however, appreciate one thing he did, until it was explained; not being able to attend my first quarterly meeting, he sent a local preacher to tell me that he could not be with me. He being a little late, I entered the pulpit and selected my text; when the minister arrived he came to the pulpit and said, "I have been sent by the presiding elder to inform you that he cannot be present, and I am to fill his place." I said, "If you have been sent as a supply you take the pulpit and do the preaching." He replied, "You preach to-day, and I will preach a *practical* sermon this evening, and you can judge of my ability; then I will preach a *doctrinal* sermon in the morning." My mind was at once made up. The con-

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gregation in the evening was large; the preacher took for his text these words, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." He appeared to be delighted in hearing himself; but the people proved their power of endurance in listening to him. On Sabbath morning the congregation was again large, and the same preacher entered the pulpit, selecting the following text: "We have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." He attempted to explain what is meant by a cunningly-devised fable. His hearers were greatly relieved when his sermon was finished. I am sure the heaviest cross I ever bore was to listen to that so-called sermon. I gave him to understand that I could not use him further. Elder Todd was a man of excellent judgment, and had only sent the man to tell me that he could not hold my quarterly. In the evening Rev. Judge Peters preached to the delight of all, causing us to forget the suffering we had endured in the morning.

### MY MARRIAGE.

I was united in marriage at Richland Center, Indiana, December 8, 1853, with Miss Mary Jane Brown, daughter of Rev. Levi and Phoebe Brown. Rev. L. Brown was a minister in the United Brethren Church, a man of good character and an excellent preacher. My wife at the time of her marriage was in her seventeenth year, and I assured her that by the grace of God my life as a minister should not be a failure; I also set before her the responsibility of a minister's wife, stating that it involved privation and suffering, but all in a glorious cause; and if she shared in the suffering she would also share in the reward. To all this she cheerfully consented. For fifty-three years she has shared in the trials and privations incident to the work of the ministry. For the first thirty-two years of

our married life it was our lot to move frequently, and often moving on wagons, through mud and swamps, and over corduroy bridges, living in cabin houses out of which the former occupants had been driven by cold or vermin, she spent days and weeks and years of loneliness with her little children; all this she endured patiently, until failing health would not permit her to move. For many years she was an earnest and enthusiastic worker in the interest of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. And now at the age of sixty-nine, on account of failing health, is not able to engage in active church work as formerly.

#### CAMP-MEETING.

In the summer of 1854, at the close of the first year of my ministry, a camp-meeting was held in a grove owned by Delonson Curtis in Berrien County, Michigan. Brother Curtis was a Christian, highly respected and a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He labored in this meeting earnestly, and being a man of deep Christian experience, his words were very helpful to me. The meeting was largely attended, and the Holy Spirit was present at every service; especially was this true of the service on Sabbath when the Spirit was poured out in a marvelous degree. The morning sermon was delivered by Elder J. S. Todd, upon the text, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." This was a masterful effort, and long remembered. God's people shouted for joy, sinners wept, and many were saved. The following ministers were present: J. S. Todd, J. Surran, F. L. Forbes, Judge Peters, F. Thomas, and others. The meeting closed with a love-feast on Monday morning; that meeting was a memorable one. At the close of the meeting we marched around the camp singing those old-time camp-meeting songs, and shouts of glory burst forth from many Spirit-filled hearts. It was indeed the gate of heaven. At that meeting we bade good-by to many true

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Christian friends whom I expect to meet in our Father's house above.

My salary for that year was \$108.00. My home much of the time during the year was with Moses Harshman, who was converted, and joined the Church during that year. He lived to be quite aged, and departed this life in peace, having lived a devoted Christian. I hope to meet him on the plains of light.

## CHAPTER VII

### PASTORAL WORK.

The annual conference of 1854 was held at Lake Chapel near Rochester, Fulton County, Indiana, Rev. Lewis Davis presiding bishop. There being no railroads, we were obliged to travel on horse-back; eighteen ministers of us in one company. We all had the old-style "saddle-bags" and "leggings." All were happy and hopeful, not "knowing the things that should befall us" at the conference. It was a pleasure to meet the venerable Doctor Davis.

During the week of conference there occurred an incident that awakened thoughtfulness. The man at whose home I was entertained had a fine melon crop; I suggested to him that it would be nice if I could take a number of those melons and invite the bishop and presiding elders to share with me. To this he consented. Accordingly I conveyed three fine melons to a corn field a short distance from the church, and invited Bishop Davis, Elders H. Freeman, and J. S. Todd, J. Surran, Elder J. Thomas (my father), and a few others, to enjoy the feast of good things. While we were enjoying this feast Bishop Davis said: "Brethren, how easily we might become involved in difficulty; suppose Brother Thomas had taken these melons without permission, and then invited us out here, and we were seen in this corn field, and the word would go out that we were caught eating stolen melons, and the fact published in the papers, it would be very serious." "Well," I said, "Bishop, we are into it; we will enjoy the melons, and get out of this corn field as soon as the melons are devoured." He thought that the wise thing to do. What a grand, good man he was.

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AN IMPRESSIVE TALK BY REV. J. THOMAS.

During the conference Rev. J. Thomas was requested to give a short sketch of his missionary life and experience; he did so. In his address he spoke of the sufferings of himself, wife and children; of his wading swamps, swimming rivers, sleeping in the woods, wet, cold, and hungry, on a salary of \$75 and \$100 per year. At one time when traveling in the "Black Swamps" of Ohio, having been gone for a number of weeks, on his return, being sixty miles from home, in the winter, it was impossible for a horse to travel because of the ice covering the roads; he was compelled to go on foot, and occasionally would break through the ice. In this way he continued his journey until he reached home. When at home he would often make rails at twenty-five cents per hundred, to earn a living for his family during his absence. When starting again upon a long journey, and he would say to his family "good-by," his children would say to him, "Don't stay so long this time." Mother would sometimes go some distance with him, and they would kneel in prayer, and father would ask God to take care of his family in his absence, and mother would ask God to bless father, and give him souls for his hire.

As he concluded his address, declaring that those were the happiest years of his ministry, they having been crowned with the salvation of hundreds of souls, he spoke to the young men of the conference on the sacredness of their calling, and of the rich reward of the faithful servant of Christ. The address was heard with much interest, and moved many to tears, inspiring them with new zeal. At the close of the address, Rev L. S. Chittenden arose and said, "Brother Thomas, you have well nigh killed me; I have sacrificed and suffered, but have not known such suffering as you have endured. God bless you."



## MY SECOND CHARGE—STEBEN MISSION.

My second charge was what was known as Steuben Mission, in Steuben County, Indiana. I found but few members in the territory. I toiled earnestly during the year; the Lord helped me, and some good was accomplished. I have reason to believe that some are in heaven who were saved during the year. But the territory over which I traveled was not hopeful. I received as salary for the year \$75.00, working with my hands to supplement what my salary lacked. During this year my older son, Boyd L., was born.

The conference of 1855 was held at North Manchester, J. J. Glossbrenner, bishop. At that conference I was appointed to the Indian Village charge, which was composed of eight appointments, and two were added during the year. The country being new, sometimes I traveled on horseback and sometimes on foot. I held eight revival meetings during the year. The first meeting was held eight miles east of Albion, Noble County, Indiana. There resided in that neighborhood a man by the name of M—— E——, a member of the United Brethren Church. He came to see me, and invited me to preach in that community. I sent an appointment for a Sabbath morning; a large and attentive congregation assembled. The service was an impressive one. Near the door there was an intelligent-appearing man who listened with close attention; his heart was touched. I wondered whether he was a Christian, but suspected he was not. Early the next morning this man called upon me and said: "I called to reveal a few things this morning; I was one of your hearers yesterday, and listened with interest to your discourse. First, I believe that the Bible is the word of God; I believe that there is a heaven and there is a hell. Man must repent and accept of Christ as his personal Savior or he cannot be saved. I am an unsaved man; never expect to be saved. I do not want to live in

heaven; I expect to spend an eternity with the lost." I said: "Why do you thus speak; are you rational? Do you speak understandingly?" "I do, sir," was his reply. "Will you explain?" "I will," he said, "in a few words. A few years ago I was married to an amiable lady, and we lived happily together. My wife was religiously inclined, and desired me to join her in the service of the Lord; but I declined. Later she introduced the subject again, pleading with me to give my heart to God. I said to her, 'You are at liberty to become a Christian.' She said, 'I will not go without you; I wish that we start together.' I still refused, saying, 'Act according to your conviction'; but she still insisted that I must join her in the work. Nothing more was said on the subject until about one year ago; just after we had retired she introduced the subject again, and urged with greater earnestness than ever before. She wept like a child, saying that she felt that she ought to be a Christian now, urging me to join her in the service of the Lord. I firmly said, 'I will not; you act according to your convictions.' She replied, 'I love you, and will never go to heaven and leave you behind; sir,' said she, 'if you can afford to go to hell I will go with you, and share the same fate in the world of night.' No more was said at that time. A short time after that memorable night my precious wife died without a moment for reflection. Now," he said, firmly and almost frantically, "I am the cause, indirectly, of my wife's destruction. She would have been saved if I had only yielded to her request. Now I will never live in heaven; I intend to live in hell." I tried to persuade him to abandon his purpose. He said: "Do you think I am mean enough to try to get to heaven when I have been the cause of the ruin of my wife? No, never! I am determined to go to hell." I followed him a mile and one-half, and tried to persuade him to change his purpose. He finally thanked me for the effort that I had put forth in his behalf; but said: "There is no use of your going



**Rev. Fletcher Thomas and Wife**  
From a photo taken while he was serving his first circuit



farther; it is fixed—eternally fixed. I have decided the matter.” We parted. He lived about three years, and then went into the presence of his Judge without any change morally, so far as I know.

SERIOUS CASE OF AGUE.

Elder Freeman and I called at the home of J. Baughman, near Kendallville, for dinner; we were both strangers to him. He was shaking with the ague. I had a small pair of “saddle-bags” resembling those used by doctors, traveling on horseback. He asked, “Are you a doctor?” I replied, “I carry medicine.” He further asked, “Have you anything that will knock the ague endwise?” I said, “Can’t your doctor cure the ague?” He replied, “He has not done it yet.” I said, “He ought to be able to cure the *ague*.” “Well, now, Doc, if you have anything that will cure the ague, I want it.” At this point Elder Freeman broke into a hearty laugh, and my earnest patient caught onto the joke, and inquired, “Are you not a preacher?” This prevented me from carrying out my purpose. Instead of being his doctor, I was to be his preacher for the year, and was kindly entertained at his home when in that community. He continued to call me “Doc.” While this was a year of toil, it was also one of victory. One of the unpleasant things with which we had to contend was the fact that there was no parsonage on the charge and no suitable house to rent; nothing accessible but an old cabin house that had been used to shelter sheep from the storm, near the home of J. Hartsel at Indian Village. After making such repairs as could be made on a house of that kind, it was thought to be quite good enough for a preacher and his family. Our sleeping apartments, kitchen, dining-room, parlor, drawing-room, study, and bathroom were all in that old cabin, 15 x 16 feet square. Being contented, we were happy, souls were saved, and the Church was strengthened.

SOLOMON'S CREEK REVIVAL.

Near the spring of this year I was invited to hold a joint meeting at Solomon's Creek, near Benton, Elkhart County, Indiana, between my charge and Syracuse Mission, the later in charge of Rev. S. W. Wells. The meeting was held in the Evangelical Church; there was but one person who was a member of the United Brethren Church, his name was Nimrod Prickett, and he was a man of good influence. There was perfect harmony among the Christian people of the community. The power of the Lord was soon manifested in convicting and converting sinners. Such an interest in the salvation of souls is seldom known as was manifested there. The people laid aside their work as far as possible, and gave attention to the blessed work of saving men. Three or four services were held each day; thirty and sometimes forty penitents would be at the altar of prayer, and some occasionally in the congregation. The meeting continued three or four weeks, and not less than seventy-five were converted, some of whom lived six miles from the church.

Special mention should be made of a young lady who was converted in this meeting; her name was Catherine Hapner. After having sought the Savior for one week without finding relief, she was suddenly taken ill with lung fever. She lingered six days, during which time she prayed every moment when awake and conscious without realizing a Christian hope. The day before her death I called to see her. When I entered the room, her father and mother met me, expressing great sorrow, saying, "Brother Thomas, our daughter will die without salvation." I said to them, "I am astonished at you; Catherine commenced seeking Christ from right motives, under the influence of the gospel; God will never let her die without salvation." I tried to lead her to accept Christ; I offered prayer for her, but still no light came to her. I left the home, and returned

the next morning, was met by the parents as on the previous morning, saying, "Catherine is near death; has no light, and will die without religion." I replied, "Catherine will never die without salvation." They said, "The doctor said, 'She cannot live more than one or two hours.'" I insisted that she would be saved. Her eyes were already growing dim. The doctor was standing by her bedside weeping. I approached her and said, "Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross to save you?" She whispered, "I do." "Do you believe that he is able to save you? Do you believe that he is willing to save you?" She whispered, "He said he would." "Do you believe his word?" "I do," was her answer. "Do you believe he will save you?" "When?" She said, "Now." Quicker than the flight of thought, light broke forth into her soul; God gave her strength, and she shouted, "Glory, glory, Jesus saves; heaven is mine forever!" In a few moment she closed her eyes in death. The doctor, though not a Christian, wept for gladness when he heard Catherine say, "Jesus saves me." We received into church fellowship all of this large family. Since that time I have officiated at the funeral of the father and mother, and six of the children, all of whom died in the faith of the gospel.

The meeting resulted in the organization of a large society, many of the members being wealthy, and among the most respected of that country, and a flourishing society is there at the present time.

#### A RECONCILIATION EFFECTED.

There was a large, flourishing society at Indian Village, but a serious difficulty had arisen, which disturbed the peace of that class. Different ministers had tried to bring about a reconciliation, but had failed. When I went to the charge I was made acquainted with the state of things in the class, and was requested to bring about a reconciliation. I said, "I will do what I can to bring peace to our

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beloved Zion"; hence I commenced a protracted meeting without counseling any one. They said you cannot hope to succeed unless a reconciliation is first effected. I said, "I shall work to that end." The meeting continued for some time. Elder H. Freeman resided in that community, and was present every evening, occupying a seat in front of the stand. Being slightly involved in the difficulty, he would mourn while I was preaching. On one occasion I said: "Brethren, we are on the eve of a great revival; I have had one mourner for the past five evenings, which is a favorable indication; Elder Freeman has been greaning over his *own* sins, or the sins of the people." The audience had a good laugh at the elder's expense. At the end of three weeks they advised that I close the meetings, as nothing could be accomplished, and they were weary. I said to them: "You stay at home and rest; I will have victory if it takes me until the middle of July." So they stayed by me.

On the following Saturday evening, in the midst of my discourse, which was on the subject, "The Duty of Confessing Our Faults One to Another," I turned away from the subject and said to Brother Hartsel, "Are you mad at any one?" As soon as he could collect his thoughts he arose and said, "No." I asked, "Do you know of any one having aught against you?" He came in front of the pulpit, and said, "If I have offended any one, if that person will meet me here I will confess my wrong." I then turned to another leading member and said to him, "Brother S——, have you enmity toward any one?" He answered, "I have none." So I continued the investigation until I struck the right parties. They began to confess at once their faults to one another; the Holy Spirit melted all hearts. Finally, Elder Freeman arose and said, "I never forgive until confession is made." Fearing that his spirit was not as sweet as it should be, I stood before him and looked directly at him; his spirit was at once changed.



The spirit of exhortation came upon him, which was accompanied with wonderful power. He, with many others, was overcome by the Holy Spirit, and fell prostrate upon the floor. Saints rejoiced and sinners were brought under conviction; a glorious revival followed, bringing peace and prosperity to the church. This indeed was a memorable year. My salary for the year was \$285.00.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ORDINATION—ITINERANCY.

The conference of 1856 was held at Deer Creek, twelve miles south of Logansport, Indiana, D. Edwards, presiding bishop. Having completed my annual conference course of reading, I was ordained at this session of conference by Bishop Edwards, who signed my ordination license. The conference was harmonious; the bishop's sermon was inspiring. One very amusing incident occurred: When inquiry was made by the bishop as to whether any one present had heard a certain candidate for the ministry preach, J. Peffley said that he was a very good "fire-side preacher," "but in the pulpit," said he, "*I can preach the socks off of him.*" The bishop said, "That is pretty close preaching."

At this conference I was appointed to the Seven Mile charge in Cass County, Indiana. On my way to that charge, I called at a farm-house for dinner, and, after paying for my dinner, I asked permission of the mother and daughter of the home (the husband being absent) to offer prayer. The request was granted. The Lord blessed this service to their good. When leaving I was invited to call again. Near the close of the year, when passing that way late in the evening, my wife being with me, and not being able to proceed farther, I called at that home, and said: "It being dark, I cannot safely go farther; I should like to stay all night here." The gentleman of the home said, "My wife is not in good health, and we cannot well keep you." Just then the wife, recognizing the voice of the stranger, came to the door with a lamp in her hand, and

asked, "Are you not the man who stopped and prayed with us?" I said, "I am." "This is the man who prayed with us," said she to her husband, and then said to me, "You can stay"; and we were welcomed into the home. They were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We often allow opportunities to pass unimproved when we might do good to others.

The year that I served on the Seven Mile charge was one of suffering and earnest toil. There were eleven appointments on the charge, requiring preaching once in three weeks. The country was new, and, owing to the condition of the roads in the spring of the year, my horse could not travel; hence I traveled on foot, sometimes passings through the woods for eight or ten miles where there were no roads, wading water above the tops of my boots. On one occasion, after wading water to reach a schoolhouse, I preached to two men. They said I preached better than usual. My text was, "The Lord is good, and knoweth them that are his." During this year I held seven revival meetings.

#### GALVESTON REVIVAL.

The meeting held in the village of Galveston is worthy of note. It was a very wicked town, destitute of religious services, and there were from one to two balls each week. The dancing-hall was owned by a young merchant. I commenced a revival meeting in the old schoolhouse, and was assisted by Father Cristler, a layman, having great power in prayer and song, and having a good, Christian experience he rendered profitable assistance in the meeting. We visited nearly all the homes in the village, conversing and praying with the people, proving a great blessing to them. I was also assisted by Rev. W. Ault, a local minister and formerly an itinerant, a man of fine talent. With no regular preaching heretofore, the devil had things largely his own way. On the

human side it was dark and forbidding; the battle to be fought was a fearful one; but in the strength of divine grace we started in for victory, and soon the Spirit of the Lord was working in the hearts of the people. When sinners began to cry for mercy, the devil mustered his forces. As one and another would yield to Christ, it was said, "They have none of our dancers yet." Finally the young merchant owning the dancing-hall came to the altar; this caused great excitement. The next evening, the house being crowded, a large, strong man took his seat near the door; when the merchant came in he pulled him down by his side. During the service the merchant wept and trembled, and when penitents were invited, the large man put his arms around him to intimidate him. I went to him and urged him to give his heart to Christ; he did not have the courage to do so. I then asked the congregation to bow in prayer; I named the young man, and the fact of his being intimidated, and prayed that the Lord would convict the man who was interfering, if he could be saved; if not, to take him out of the way. The Holy Spirit was present; a feeling of fear came over the people; many came to Christ and were saved. The man who stood by the merchant was so alarmed that sleep well nigh left him that night. In the morning he was hunting the preacher, saying that he intended to whip him if he could find him. When this came to my knowledge, in company with Brother Ault, I went down into town, saw the man going into a store with a crowd of men and boys following him. I said to Rev. Mr. Ault, "Let us go over and see the man." He objected, saying, "He is a large, ugly fellow." But I insisted on going. As we entered the store I said, "Good-morning, gentlemen." The angry man said, "Thomas, I want to know whom you meant last night in your prayer?" I asked, "Whom do you think I meant?" Said he, "I think you meant me." "Why do you think I meant you?" He answered, "Because of having my arms around the

young merchant." I said, "You thought rightly; I meant you." "Well," said he, "I don't thank you for such praying." I said, "I was not praying for thanks." At this he became very angry, and said, "If you ever make another such prayer, I will whip you." I replied: "There is no danger of that. In the first place you are too *small*. In the second place you are too much of a *coward* to try." Striking his fists together, he said, "I will whip you now." I said, "There is no cause for alarm; your eyes are not the *right color*." With greater earnestness he renewed the threat. I still insisted that there was no cause for alarm. "You, my friend, are too bow-legged." At this the crowd broke into a laugh; the man also laughed. I then preached him a short sermon. That evening the Lord was with us in wonderful power, to convict and save. This meeting was a grand victory; bringing gladness to many homes and hearts, resulting in the organization of a good society, and the erection of a house of worship. My salary for the year was \$284.00; as I look back over the year, and call to mind the meager support that I received and the ability of the people to have done better, I am surprised that the Lord blessed them at all.

#### A GOOD EXAMPLE.

I preached at the home of Rev. Mr. Ault, three miles south of Galveston; on Saturday evening I stayed at the home of Father Cristler. On Sabbath morning, just as we were starting to church, a wagon-load of visitors drove up, intending to spend the day at that home. Father Cristler said to them, "Friends, this is our preaching-day, and this is our preacher; we would be pleased to have you go with us." They declined. Then said he, "You put up your horses in the barn, and feed them, and feel at home; we will return in about two hours, then mother will get dinner, and we will have a visit." The old lady hesitated a little. Father Cristler said, "Mother, it is time to go to

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church," so we went; the Lord wonderfully blessed Brother Cristler that day. When we returned the visitors were gone. Mother Cristler said, "Father, that is too bad." "No, mother, that is all right; I had to offend them or the Savior. If I had offended the Savior he would not have blessed me as he did. The next time they come to visit they will come on a week day." Being young, this made a lasting impression upon my mind. There are but few men of such sterling integrity; if there were, there would be less Sabbath desecration.

At the conference of 1857, held at Berrien Springs, Michigan, L. Davis, bishop, I was appointed to the Warsaw Circuit, composed of eight appointments, preaching at each appointment once in two or three weeks. During this year our only daughter, Annis Viola, was born. My first revival meeting was held at the old Union Chapel Church, four miles west of Warsaw. This class was composed of earnest, God-fearing men and women. I shall never forget the kindness I received at their hands. The meeting continued three weeks, resulting in fifty or more conversions and a goodly number of accessions. Of eight young men who pledged to each other that they would not become religious during that meeting, all were converted but one, who said, "I will run the risk." In three weeks after the meeting closed he was suddenly taken ill, and before dying he desired to see me. As I entered his room he said, "I am dying, and am lost." Oh, how he regretted that he did not give his heart to Christ. Weak as he was, he arose on his knees in the bed, and with up-lifted hands he sought for mercy until he sank in death. We could only hope that through the tender compassion of a loving Savior he was saved. This should be a warning to all who dare to procrastinate their return to God.

The next meeting was held at Warsaw in the old Baptist Church, where we organized a small society of good, responsible members, but the influences surrounding us

were very unfavorable to a revival. The churches in the city were cold and formal, but with the few faithful ones trusting in God, we undertook the work. In the first service the Holy Spirit was present. The congregation increased as the meeting progressed. God owned his word; sinners were convicted and many were saved. God's people were quickened and set forward in their Christian life. There were many shouts in the meeting which caused much excitement in the city, as they were not accustomed to it.

During the meeting an impressive incident occurred. A young lady of good Christian character, from the country, when filled with the Spirit, would sometimes fall and remain unconscious to her surroundings for an hour or more; when she revived she would shout, and manifest apparently superhuman strength; when thus filled with the Spirit, on one occasion she fell and lay in her brother's arms. An unbeliever said to her brother, "I can hold your sister so that she will not bound over the floor when she returns to consciousness." "You can try," said her brother, "if you will act gentlemanly." So he took the brother's place, taking hold of the lady's wrists. She lay for an hour without any signs of breathing; when they began to sing, she returned to consciousness, and suddenly cried, "Glory to Jesus," throwing the man four or five feet between two seats. When he arose he appeared chagrined, and had no desire to experiment further. It is useless to say that the congregation was amused. This manifestation of divine power was turned to a good account in the meeting.

Some of the business men of the city were in the habit of coming near the close of the meeting merely out of curiosity to witness the shouting. One evening, when many were at the altar, as usual a number of that class entered the church. I said to those at the altar: "For a wise purpose I will close the service; you return to-morrow evening."

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I announced that there would be preaching the next evening promptly at seven o'clock, and dismissed the congregation. This had the desired effect upon those men; one of them saying as they were returning to their homes: "We shall do well to keep still; that man gave us the most gentlemanly rebuke that could have been given. We virtually said to him, 'We do not want to hear you preach, but simply come through curiosity,' and he gave us to understand that our course was improper, and against the interest of the meeting." This meeting resulted in the conversion of many souls, and the quickening of the church. Among those who labored in that meeting were Rev. George Crouse, George Harter and wife, Daniel Deeds, and many others of precious memory.

### CENTER REVIVAL.

My next meeting was held at Center, near Silver Lake. Here we had a large, flourishing society, among whom were G. Gager, A. Hommon, J. Hommon, Rev. S. W. and W. P. Wells, and many others. Rev. S. W. Wells was received into the conference with me in 1853; he is now in his eighty-seventh year. This meeting was a grand victory; many were saved and the Church was strengthened.

### THE LORD'S WORK FIRST.

My next revival was at Pleasant Chapel. Here I was informed by a member of the Church that they were not ready for a meeting. It was good sleighing, and they wished to haul logs to the mill; therefore they desired to postpone the meeting. I said: "The Lord is ready now, and I am ready, and I will go on with the meeting; souls may die and be lost while I am waiting on you." While they were hauling logs I was preaching the gospel; the meeting grew in interest with every service. In a few evenings the altar was filled with penitents. The house would not hold all the people; we held two services each



day, and by four o'clock the services would commence, and before the time for the evening service souls would be saved. After a short sermon the altar would be crowded with penitents. The meeting continued three weeks; but while the Lord was saving souls, the devil was at work. There lived in the community a professed Universalist who made it his business to visit those who were interested in their spiritual welfare, and if possible confuse them by his arguments. In my sermon on a certain Sabbath I paid particular attention to him; he was converted that evening in the woods, and came to the church without his hat. He entered the church that evening shouting, saying, as he came near the pulpit: "Here is your Universalist; I found the Savior in the woods, but lost my hat." That evening was a memorable one because of the manifestation of God's saving power. Some members of other churches came to the altar and were quickened and united with us in church-fellowship. Among them were L. Bonewitz and wife; also their children. The parents soon moved to North Manchester, and became pillars in the United Brethren Church there. A few years ago the parents went to their reward.

A PROFITABLE LESSON.

Among those who came to the altar during the meeting were two young men who were insincere; they were not citizens of that place. It was suggested by a member of the church (Rev. S. W. Wells) that we throw them out at the window; I said, "They will get a better experience here." Then a large man knelt in front of them as their instructor, and would raise their heads and tell them to look up or they would never be saved. This being embarrassing to them, they would crowd their heads down on the altar; but he would continue to tell them to look up. This was indeed a trying ordeal for them; they were paying dearly for their insincerity. At the close of the

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service I gave an invitation to unite with the Church. I said: "We receive seekers under the watch-care of the Church; but as for these two young men who came here insincerely, I advise that they go home and stay there until they can attend the house of the Lord without making light of sacred things." They both thought it was the hottest place they were ever in. They left the neighborhood and did not return to the service again.

This was a year of great revivals and many conversions; about one hundred and sixty-five conversions during the year, over sixty in the last meeting. While the year was one of toil, it was also one of victory for the Church. My successors on the Warsaw charge were J. S. Todd and N. Castle, the latter now a bishop in this Church.

## CHAPTER IX

## ITINERANCY—CONTINUED.

The conference of 1858 convened at Roanoke, Indiana, Bishop L. Davis, presiding. At this session, N. Castle united with the conference. By this time the conference had grown much stronger than when I united in 1853. I was appointed to the Elkhart Circuit with seven appointments, and one added during the year. On this charge N. Castle resided at the home of Mr. Frizzel, where I first met young Castle five years prior to this time on my way to my first charge. An incident here occurred which indicated the aspiration of the boy. Mr. Frizzel asked young Castle to read an article in the paper as a sample of his ability to read well. As he was reading I observed an error in the pronunciation of a word, to which I called his attention. When I was gone he said to Mr. Frizzel, "If I live I will show that preacher that I can read as good as he can." This was an index to the boy's success.

My first meeting on the Elkhart charge was held at the Pine Creek church, nine miles east of Elkhart. This was a meeting of great power, resulting in the conversion of many, the exact number I do not now recall. In that meeting some of the good sisters would commence to shout as soon as some would come to the altar, and would fall upon the seekers; by way of reproof, I said to them: "You shout at the wrong time; wait until sinners are saved, then shout if you desire. I do not want you to shout as soon as penitents come to the altar and fall on them to their confusion." This so offended them that they would sit

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and pout evening after evening. I finally said: "Sisters, you are good, and I am happy to see you here in the service, but I am tired of your pouting; I prefer, if you must pout, that you do your pouting at home, then you will be better prepared to assist in the meeting." This hint was all that was necessary; they meant well but acted unwisely.

### REVIVAL AT PHILSON SCHOOLHOUSE.

My next meeting was held at the Philson schoolhouse, five miles east of Elkhart, where N. Castle preached his first sermon, to which reference is made in "Our Bishops." Here we were permitted to witness two extraordinary displays of God's convicting and converting power. The first to which I refer was a young lady who was teaching a select school in that place. Being prejudiced against the altar she said to a pious aunt with whom she lived: "Aunt, I love to hear that boy preach; hence I attend the service, but he will never get me to that altar; I have been too well raised; I think too much of myself to get down at that altar in the dust." The following evening, after speaking thus to her aunt, she came to the service a little late accompanied by one of her lady pupils and was seated near the door. At the close of the sermon an invitation was given to come to the altar. She instantly arose and came to the altar, bringing the young lady with her; they both bowed at the altar. In less than three minutes she arose and left the house with an air of disgust, returning to her home weeping, and said to her aunt, "I have disgraced myself." Her aunt said, "Jennie, what has happened?" She said: "Don't you think that I went to that altar of prayer to-night; I did not realize what I was doing." Her aunt replied, "If that is all, you will be all right." She said to her, "They will never get me there again." Her aunt informed me of what she had said. I knew she could not stay away from the service, hence used a little strategy. I arranged with two sisters to hold a

place for her near the pulpit and told the usher to seat her in that place. The plan worked well. She was seated as directed. I asked the Lord to help me preach his word; the Spirit accompanied the truth to her heart. She wept much during the sermon, and would have fallen to the floor had she not been supported by those who were seated near her. The ladies assisted her in coming to the altar; for six evenings in succession she bowed at that despised altar. I never heard a penitent plead more earnestly for mercy than did she. I soon learned why her conversion was delayed; the opposition of her friends she thought she could not endure. As she was pleading for salvation, I said, "Miss Lea, are you willing to bear reproach for Christ's sake?" She said, "I cannot bear the disapproval of my friends." I said: "You must be willing to bear reproach. Your Master bore reproach for you." On the following evening I interrogated her again as to whether she was willing to bear reproach for Christ; after a struggle she looked up and said, "Lord Jesus, I will bear all for thee." It was enough; she was brightly saved. She praised the Lord. She said, "I wish I could become more humble." Her sister living in Ohio wrote, saying: "Jennie, I attended a ball on New Year's Eve, and had a good time; wish you had been here." Jennie answered, saying: Dear sister, while you were at the ball New Year's Eve, I was at the cross seeking pardon; Jesus revealed his lovely face; the Spirit applied the blood to my poor, sin-sick soul—all glory to his name. Had a good time; wish you had been *here*." Twelve years later I received a letter from Jennie in the West, saying: "I take the liberty to write you that I have never forgotten that New Year's Eve when Jesus saved me from my sin. I am still on the way, trying to be faithful in his service."

The second was the conversion of Mr. Swartz. During the meeting there came into the congregation a rough and strange-appearing man; I thought he was the hardest-

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looking man I ever saw—roughly dressed, and hair untrimmed, hanging down over his shoulders. His coming to the church was a surprise to the people, he not having been in church for a number of years. On the next evening he was present again, occupying a seat near the center of the house. A brother said to me, “You may have trouble with that man.” I said, “Let him alone; only treat him kindly.” The next night he was seated only two seats from the desk. He wept during the sermon, at the close of which I said to him, “Are you a Christian?” He looked at me and said, “A Christian! I am a poor, miserable sinner.” I said, “Would you like to be saved?” “Do you think there is mercy for such a wretched sinner as I?” “Certainly; God’s saving mercy and saving power are unlimited.” Taking him by the hand, I said, “Go with me to the altar.” He said: “If I should go to that altar it would ruin your meeting; not a lady or gentleman would come near.” I said: “If the ladies and gentlemen want to go to hell because a poor sinner wants to be saved, they will have to go. Come and go with me to the altar.” He at once arose and fell at the altar; the members of the church acted like a flock of scared sheep, shunning him, and seemingly as much frightened as if he had had the “smallpox.” I said, “Brethren, why do you not come and pray for this man?” One said, “Thomas, do you know what kind of a case you have on your hands?” I said: “The Holy Spirit has this man in hand; you come and pray for him.” The church-members gathered about him, and earnest prayer was offered for him; but no light came that evening. The following evening he was again at the altar; his prayers were heard; he was saved, and gave God the glory. He went to his wife and asked pardon for the life he had lived. The conversion of Mr. Swartz produced a good effect upon the meeting and the community. His wife and many others were soon converted. Three days after this man’s conversion I met a fine-appearing

man, dressed in a suit of black, shaved and with hair trimmed, shoes blackened, collar and tie; extending his hand, he said, "How do you do; I am glad to see you." I said, "I am glad to see you, but I do not know you." He said, "Have you forgotten Swartz?" I said, "In the name of sense, is this Swartz?" He replied, "This is Swartz." I said to him, "Swartz, what has happened to you?" "Were you not at church three evenings ago when the Lord saved me? Thomas," he said, "I have been a poor, dirty sinner much of my life until three days ago, when Jesus cleansed me from my sins and made me a new creature. Now by his grace I expect to be respectable in my appearance and life." I said: "I will vote for you; I believe in a religion that will cause a man to wash his face and comb his hair, once a day at least." When my year was closed on the charge we parted. He served as a soldier in the War of the Rebellion. Thirteen years later I met a man on the train one day, his hair sprinkled with gray, and his visage showing hard service; he came and extending his hand, said, "Thomas, I am glad to see you." I said, "I do not know you." He answered, "My name is Swartz." I asked, "Are you still a Christian?" He answered: "I am still on the way; I will never forget the night you took me by the hand and said, 'If the ladies and gentlemen want to go to hell because a lost sinner wants to be saved, they will have to go.' Oh, how dark that awful night, but how glorious was the light that shone into my poor soul!" I saw him no more until 1906. I was holding a meeting at North Elkhart, six miles from the place where he was converted, and witnessed his tears of joy while I was trying to preach the blessed gospel that saved him.

A third meeting during this year was held at the Sugar-grove appointment, then known as the Garrel appointment. The circumstances were very unfavorable, the house being too small to accommodate the people. Here we had a good society. The meeting grew in interest with

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every service; the altar was crowded with penitents for twelve evenings in succession; thirty or forty were saved and added to the Church. My quarterly meeting followed the revival services; J. Surran was the presiding elder. The meeting on Sabbath was held in Benjamin Garrel's barn. The charge was well represented; the meeting was spiritual and inspiring.

A fourth meeting was held at the Pleasant Plain Church, three miles south of the city of Elkhart, near the home of Father Livengood, father-in-law of Bishop Castle, and Rev. E. H. Pontius. But few laymen have been more widely known or highly honored than this faithful man of God. He had a large family. The wife and mother was amiable and highly respected. Harmony prevailed in the home, which was the home of the weary itinerant, not only of his own denomination but of other churches as well. Brother Livengood was always present to hear his pastor preach, when it was possible to be present; not to criticise, but to encourage the minister. Some years ago he went to his reward. Others of precious memory might be mentioned. The meeting at Pleasant Plain was one of interest; a few souls were saved, and the Church was strengthened. Here we had a faithful band of young people who were a great inspiration to their pastor; also fathers and mothers in Israel who were known for their Christian fidelity.

### AN INFIDEL MEETING.

Soon after the meeting closed at Pleasant Plain, two infidels from the city of Elkhart sent an appointment to lecture in the schoolhouse on the subject, "The Bible not an Inspired Book." There being a few infidels in the community, and knowing that many of the young members of the Church would be present, I decided that it was proper for me to be present; not intending, however, to say one word. The first speaker was a young man, of some talent.



He had memorized one of Thomas Payne's lectures against the inspiration of the Bible. Occasionally his memory would fail him, and he would be at sea; then after a little time he would again start out in his lecture and do quite well. I had just finished reading Bishop Watson's reply to Payne, and it was fresh in my memory. When the first speaker had finished his address, the second speaker, who had been a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church (but had fallen from grace), arose and went through with a tirade of abuse of the Bible and the Church of Christ.

As he was closing his address he said, "If there is any one present who wishes to say anything, there is perfect liberty." In those days I was a good singer. Many of the young people were present, and I began to sing the old hymn, "A charge to keep I have." I think I never heard the young people sing as on that occasion; and really I felt that Christ was honored by the singing, at the close of which the last speaker arose, fighting mad. He stamped and tore around at a fearful rate, even becoming vulgar in his language. I thought of the words of the Savior: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

As he closed the meeting he said, "Now if that man who sang, 'A charge to keep I have,' wishes to defend his Bible, he can do so." I arose and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen:—I came here to-night, thinking that I might hear something by which I might profit; but not to take any part in the exercises. The first speaker is a comparatively young man, and of some talent, and worthy of a

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better cause than he is advocating. He has attempted to deliver one of Thomas Payne's lectures to-night, but has not done justice to Mr. Payne, though he has done the best he could. His mistake is in undertaking a task so responsible. If any one of you desires to read the lecture the gentleman has tried to deliver to-night, and will come to my home I will let you have it. I will also let you have Dr. Watson's reply to the same." I then said: "As for this blackguard (referring to the second speaker), I do not wish to refer to what he has said; he should go home and remain there. He is not fit to appear in civil society. Ladies, you have been insulted to-night, and as it is now late, I think we should all go to our homes. We will pray that the good Spirit may guide us. We will receive the benediction." The meeting closed. The speakers became wonderfully angry, but we were not troubled with them again. On this charge I found many excellent Christians whose kindness shown to me and my family I shall never forget. Of precious memory are James Kinion and his wife and daughters; nearly all of whom have gone to live in the home of the blest; but continue to live in my memory. I shall be glad to meet them in the city of God.

### **AN EXPERIENCE WITH POODLE DOGS.**

I was invited to preach in a certain place destitute of regular preaching. The people generally were in good circumstances and were, in the main, morally inclined, also intelligent and orderly. My congregations were large. I was not at any time disturbed by the crying of children, for it was not considered in good taste in that community for ladies to take their children to church, but it was considered perfectly in order for them, if they could afford it, to bring poodle-dogs, and hold them during the service. Many brought their poodle-dogs with them to church. When one dog would become restless and jump down on

the floor, other dogs would do likewise. At the close of the service on a Sabbath morning, I said, "Ladies, if it will suit you as well, I wish you would leave your dogs at home, and bring your children; at least leave the dogs at home." All seemed to receive my remarks kindly. At my next appointment the congregation was larger than the previous one. There were no children, but a small increase in the number of dogs; during my discourse the dogs would jump down on the floor and have their own way, which was certainly not in good taste. I sat down, saying, "I was not called to preach to dogs; when you get those dogs out, I will proceed with my discourse." Just then a man, somewhat odd in appearance, arose and drove the dogs out of the house; seating himself in the door, he said to me, "Now, sir, go on with your sermon, and I will take care of the dogs." I then proceeded with my discourse; for a while all went well, until a rather mirthful scene occurred. The fellow having charge of the dogs, becoming interested in the sermon, forgot them, when all at once the dogs, six or a dozen strong, returned and came up the aisle. The affair was so amusing that I did not censure the people for losing their gravity. At the close of the service I said: "I will fill this pulpit in two weeks; I promise you that you will not be disturbed long with dogs. I will bring my buggy-whip in the stand with me, and will show you that there is a law against taking dogs to church." It was a question with me whether the ladies would again return to church; but to my surprise and delight I had a fine congregation at the next service, and the dogs were left at home. Quite a number of children were present, and we had a good service, at the close of which all shook hands with me and left some money in my hand. On counting the money I found that I had \$32.00 in cash. This was the close of the conference year. The people said to me, "If you will preach for us next year, we will see that you are well remunerated for your

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services." I was not returned to the charge as I should have been. This was a year of earnest toil, but a year of great victory. The majority of those with whom I labored have gone to their reward.

## CHAPTER X

## ITINERANCY—CONTINUED.

At the conference of 1859, which was held at Laketon, Indiana, L. Davis presiding, I was appointed to the Berrien Circuit, in Berrien County, Michigan, where I spent a very pleasant and profitable year. This was the home of Rev. E. H. Lamb, so well known by the early ministers of the St. Joseph Conference. At that time he was the presiding elder of the Berrien District. He served a number of years as presiding elder. He was a man of sweet spirit, true to his God and the Church, and was never known to take advantage of his brethren. He was an earnest student, a clear thinker, and a sound theologian; was not excelled by any preacher in the conference, and by few in the Church in that day. As a result of much study his sight failed, and he was blind a number of years before his death. During the years of his blindness he was patient and full of hope. A short time before his death, three of his brethren, with myself, called to see him. We spent half a day at his home; our visit was greatly appreciated by him and his family. Before leaving we sang some of his favorite hymns, and offered prayer, after which we placed twelve dollars in his hand. Tears fell from his sightless eyes as he said, "God bless you." He was a great and good man; Lamb by name and nature, he was a good type of Christian manhood.

On this charge I became acquainted with Rev. John Schlonicher, formerly a minister in one of the eastern conferences. He was a man of profound learning, and independent thought; he was not contentious, but could not be

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governed; hence, while he held his membership in the United Brethren Church, he was not a member of any annual conference. Although peculiar in this respect, he was nevertheless a good man, and a good counselor. He was a great admirer of Rev. N. Castle in the early days of his ministry; took a deep interest in him, and was helpful to him.

Here also was the home of Rev. J. B. Slight, generally known in an early day in the Sandusky and St. Joseph conferences, in the latter of which he served as presiding elder, and represented his conference a number of times in the General Conference. He was an excellent expounder of the Word of God, and very successful in revival work. He was true to the principles of the United Brethren Church. Long since he went to his reward. I also found many good people in the laity, among whom were B. Pennel and wife, C. Pennel and wife and son, J. Ewalt and wife, — Whetstone and wife, J. Lechey and wife, J. Lemmon and wife, with many others of precious memory.

My first meeting was held at Berrien Springs, Michigan; this was a memorable meeting. Many souls were brought from darkness to light and added to the Church. I also held a meeting at the Lemmon Class with good results; the number saved I cannot now state. The meeting was full of interest to the Church, many were saved and Christians were set forward in their Christian life. Here I wish to give an account of the conversion of

### ANNA LOCKEY.

She was brought under such deep conviction that she could not consent to leave the church until she was saved; finally in her struggle for pardon she lost all consciousness of her surroundings. About twelve o'clock at night her father became alarmed about her; I said, "Father, she is not dead, only to sin; she will be able to accompany you

home before morning." Just then Sister Feathers, a sweet singer, started the chorus, "We are going home in the morning." Just then Anna Lockey returned to consciousness and struck the chorus, "Oh, how I love Jesus." Then followed exclamations of joy and much shouting.

The year was a good one, and I should have remained another year. The larger number of those good people have left us and are living with the pure around the throne of God. I shall be glad to meet them all in the morning, and, as we sometimes sing, "won't that be a happy meeting?"

At the annual conference of 1860, held at Livengoods (near Elkhart), \*J. Lawrence, editor of the *Religious Telescope*, bishop *pro tempore*, I was appointed to the North Manchester Circuit. This required a long move, a distance of eighty miles. There being no railroads at that time from where we lived at North Manchester, our moving was necessarily on wagons. This was indeed trying to my wife, but she bore it all with a spirit of resignation. Three good brethren came and loaded our goods, and we said "good-by" to our dear people. In less than three days our goods were in the humble parsonage at North Manchester. The brethren who moved us were Lawrence Bonawitz, John Siferd, and John Bonawitz. In a short time our goods were arranged, and we were at home once more. The charge agreed to pay me \$300.00; I scarcely knew what to do with so much money, for up to this time my salary had not exceeded \$285.00.

This year I had a colleague, Rev. William Prouty, who was to receive \$50.00, with some donations. This was a great year; God's saving power was wonderfully manifested in convicting and saving souls. Not long after our arrival on the charge I was engaged in a revival at Twin Lake, the home of Brother Bonawitz, where my wife and chil-

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\* Bishop L. Davis was elected president of Otterbein University and was not present at this session.

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dren remained during the meeting. It was indeed a comfortable home. In this society there were men and women who had a good Christian experience, and had power with God in song and prayer. They were not afraid to say "amen" and "glory to God" when filled with his love. The revival soon broke out, and the Holy Spirit accompanied the word to the hearts of sinners, and the altar was soon crowded with earnest seekers, and the conversions were clear. The people came for miles around. Although the roads were new and muddy, the people came nevertheless; if they could not drive to church, they would walk. God blessed them, and the people gave him the glory. Here we built up a good society.

My second meeting was held at Laketon, where we had a flourishing society. The meeting was protracted three weeks, with good results, the number converted I cannot now give.

North Manchester was the place of holding my third meeting. Here we had a good class, with a number of men of good Christian character upon whom we could depend in time of special effort for the salvation of souls. Among the number were the following: Samuel Walters who wielded a good influence; Father Fanning and Joseph Hippensteele, with many others who lived and labored for Christ. The meeting was protracted nearly three weeks, resulting in the conversion of about forty-five souls. I was assisted in the meeting by Rev. William Prouty, a young man of zeal and earnestness.

My fourth meeting was held two and one-half miles from North Manchester, at what was known as the Walter's class. The workers in this meeting, for the most part, were those who assisted in the meeting at North Manchester. Some of the members who were not permitted to attend the meeting in town said to me, "You cannot expect to see sinners saved here under two weeks." I said, "If we, as God's people will have faith, and will get the



Spirit of agonizing prayer, the revival may be considered here now." One good old brother, Father Townson, said: "Brother Thomas, I am willing to do anything I can; but there is one thing I cannot do, and that is to pray in public. I tried once and failed; I will never try again." I said, "You will pray in public before I leave this charge." The first evening of the meeting, at the close of the sermon, preached from the text, "Quit you like men; be strong," eight young men came to the altar; the church offered earnest prayer for their conversion. Among those who offered prayer was Brother Townson; he was a good instructor for seekers at the altar, earnestly prayed mentally and spoke encouragingly to penitents. Finally, seven of the young men were converted; the eighth was still pleading. I said, "Father Townson, go and instruct that young man; he did so, and then began to call upon the name of the Lord. He became so inspired and prayed so mightily to God in behalf of the seeking soul at the altar that he could have been heard ten rods. The one at the altar, the last one of the eight, was saved, and how the old brother rejoiced. I whispered in his ear, saying, "You did pray, did you not?" With the simplicity of a child, he said, "Brother Thomas, please go away and let me alone." I did. That good brother has been in heaven about forty years. There were about thirty conversions in that meeting.

IN MEMORY OF BRYANT FANNING.

Much of the success, during the year that I was pastor on the Manchester charge, was due to the earnest labors of a young man by the name of Bryant Fanning, who lived in the town of North Manchester. At that time he was not a minister, but rendered valuable assistance in all the meetings held on the charge during the year. He was one of the sweet singers in Israel and walked close with God. To know him was to love him. If at any time there was a lull

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in the service and I would indicate to him that some effort was needed to arouse the church, he would sing or pray or exhort as the circumstances required, and there was a mysterious power attending his efforts that could not be understood, but was realized by all. He seldom failed to move the people; he would often go to men in the congregation and, taking them by the hand, would kneel by them, and would pray for them, and often such divine power would attend his prayers that many would yield to Christ and be saved.

Soon after this he received license to preach, and was received into the annual conference and placed on a charge. He was not a strong preacher, but a "soul winner." He lived to work in the ministry seven years. There was no man in this conference who was more successful in bringing lost men to Christ than was he. I heard Bishop Castle say of him: "He is a mystery to me; a secret power attends him that is marvelous. When I was with him in revival work, I felt as weak as a child; I felt like hiding away and letting the Holy Spirit use *him*." Oh, how he could reach the throne in prayer! The seventh year of his ministry was on the Manchester charge; over-work and exposure caused his strength to fail, and he was soon made conscious that his work was done. Although his sufferings at times were intense, he bore them without a murmur. Sometimes he would sing, and then in the midst of his sufferings he would kneel and pray. A few hours before his death he requested that his neighbors and friends pass in a procession before his door, that he might talk to them and say good-by. The request was granted; two hundred and fifty marched slowly along, while he sitting in his chair delivered his farewell message. He then said to his wife and Elder N. Castle: "When you see that I am going, sing my favorite chorus, 'Oh, come, angel band, come and around me stand.' If I feel Jesus is still with me, and I have strength, I will raise my hand." When they saw

that he was dying they sang; he raised his hand, as his blood-washed spirit winged its way through the gates into the city of God.

THE MACEDONIAN CRY.

By request I visited a very wicked neighborhood, where lived a man by the name of Flichtcraft, who had made himself notorious for wickedness; I had heard so much about him that I was rather anxious to see him. There were a few Christian people in the community who raised the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us;" therefore I sent an appointment. I was accompanied by Lawrence Bonawitz. I was met by a large audience, and took for my text Ezekiel 33:15, "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity: he shall surely live, he shall not die." I was wonderfully inspired in preaching the word; Christ was honored in the service. While many of the unsaved were weeping, there was one in particular whom I singled out as Joe Flichtcraft; I was correct in my opinion. The next night the congregation was large and attentive. At the close of the service, Flichtcraft used some unbecoming language; I said to him kindly, "Mr. Flichtcraft, you should not use such language, especially before the ladies." He pretended to get angry, and said, "No man can shut my mouth." I had heard that he was of an irritable nature, so I said no more. He said to his wife that he would never hear me preach again. The next day I was going across a large field; I saw Flichtcraft on a log chopping, but I did not change my course. When I came up to him I said, "Good-morning, Mr. Flichtcraft." He said, "Thomas, you insulted me last night in church." "I hope not," I said. "Yes, you did." "Well," I said, "what are you going to do about it?" "Well, I had thought that I would get religion, but now I won't do a thing." I said, "Then you can go to hell if you want to." Said

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he, "I will never hear you preach again." I said, "You can go to the devil if you will." He was dumbfounded, and did not reply. I said, "Good-day, Mr. Fritchcraft," and pursued my way. He soon became so miserable that he quit his work and went to the house and said to his wife: "What do you think preacher Thomas said to me to-day; don't you think he told me that I could go to hell?" She asked, "What did you say to him that caused him to say that?" "I told him that he had insulted me; he asked me what I was going to do about it; I said I had thought to get religion, but now I would not." Then she said: "And he told you that you could go to hell? That is about so; a man can take whichever road he chooses." "I told him I would never hear him preach again, and he said that I could go to the devil." She said, "I think he is about right; this is a free country." He said, "I will never go to his meeting again." So he did not come to the meeting that night, but was a miserable man. The next day he was in our service; penitents were invited to the altar for prayer. Mr. Fritchcraft was the first to fall down before God and ask for pardon; he was happily converted during the meeting.

The resistance upon the part of the unsaved was fearful; men were so deeply convicted that they would remain away from the meeting. On Sabbath evening, in the opening prayer I was led to pray for a man in the community who was so deeply convicted of sin that he did not dare to come to the services. In the prayer I was led to speak his name; his two daughters, who were converted three weeks before at a revival meeting in an adjoining community, with the Christian people who had come in from other neighborhoods, were inspired to pray for the man named. The Holy Spirit was present; I think I never realized the divine presence more than on that occasion. When all had ceased prayer, Tressa Jontz continued to plead for the salvation of her father. Such a prayer, for its

simplicity, I never heard; the faith of the girl was marvelous, she continued thus: "My father is a kind father, but he does not love Thee; he is so convicted that he will not come to church. Oh, Savior, please go to my father to-night and so powerfully convict him that he cannot resist; let me find him when I go home just about the center of the room, pleading for mercy. Now, Savior, thou hast promised if I would ask I should receive. I know it will be that way, for thou hast said so." There were but few in the congregation who were not in tears while Tressa thus held on in prayer for her father. The meeting that evening was attended with convicting and saving power. I was very anxious to know the result of that wonderful prayer—wonderful because of its simplicity and faith. I went home with the family after the service; when we arrived at the home we found it as Tressa said it would be. Mr. Jontz was in the center of the room pleading for mercy; Tressa took him by the hand, and said, "Pa, I asked the Lord to bring you here; I knew he would." She held to his hand until the Lord saved him. This was a wonderful meeting; the Master got to himself a great name; a good society was organized. Tressa died soon after her father's conversion; she died in the victory of faith and went to live with Christ. This was a year of success; I cannot speak of each meeting in detail; between one and two hundred were converted, and one hundred and thirty-five were added to the Church.

I may here with profit refer to a marvelous case of conviction and conversion. At another appointment during this year a man came into the congregation on one occasion; he had not been in church for many years. He was one of the most wicked and profane men in the community where he lived. During the discourse he took his seat near the door, and began to cry for mercy; the longer he prayed the more intensely earnest he became, until he came to the altar; the sermon closed, and prayer was

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offered. The man declared that he saw hell open to receive him. He plead that God would save him from hell; finally help came, his sins were pardoned, the power of the devil was broken, and he shouted "Glory!" at the top of his voice. Some said it was all excitement, but he declared that he really saw hell open to receive him. It was one of those cases of conviction that David describes in his own experience, "The pains of hell gat hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow." Twelve years from that time I was traveling on horse-back and overtook a man, and asked permission to pass, as I was in a hurry. As I was passing he said, "Ain't you a preacher?" "I preach a little occasionally," I replied. "Is your name Thomas?" "That is my name." "Do you remember preaching in Wabash County in a schoolhouse at a certain time, when a lost sinner came and fell down crying for mercy, and when saved could not be controlled?" "I do, quite distinctly." "Well, I am the man; I have never forgotten that night; I was as near hell that night as a sinner could be, and not be in it. I saw it; I saw my awful doom; but, glory to the name of Jesus, he saved me, and I am still on the way to the city of God." The power of sin was broken, old things passed away, and all things were made new. Signing a card or holding up his finger would not have quieted his troubled heart; it required the resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit. Oh, for a thorough and sin-destroying salvation! This year closed satisfactorily.

In the Seven Mile church, Seven Mile charge, the annual conference of 1861 was held, J. Markwood, presiding bishop. This was the first time he came to our conference, having been elected bishop in 1861, in which office he served eight years. He was strange to us, and we to him, but we were not long in becoming acquainted, and the better acquainted the more we appreciated him.

At this session of conference N. Castle was ordained. The following are some of the ministers who were present

at that time: E. H. Lamb, J. B. Slight, J. S. Todd, H. Freeman, J. M. Hershey, N. Castle, E. Johnson, J. M. Pickard, E. Hoover, J. Iliff, S. Surfase, A. Surfase, N. Surfase, R. Baker, F. S. Forbs, J. Piffley, H. Hardy, B. Ross, J. Lamb, J. Terrel, J. A. Cummins, J. F. Bartmess, A. M. Cummins, H. A. Snep, — Pendland, H. Tuck, S. W. Wells, S. P. Wells, S. W. Chatman, M. B. Patton, R. Cummins, A. H. Slusser, A. Richhart. Of these only four remain; namely, Bishop N. Castle, J. A. Cummins, S. W. Wells and myself.

I was appointed at this conference to the Seven Mile charge, which I had served five years prior to this time. The circuit was large and the roads much of the time difficult to travel, and in some places impassable. With a meager salary promised, I scarcely felt that duty demanded the great sacrifice that I and my family must make in going to that charge, when the people were able to pay a better salary; furthermore I knew that there were serious divisions in two of the leading societies on the charge. With the hope of effecting a reconciliation I was sent to that charge; I was expecting, however, to be sent to a more desirable charge; but owing to the disturbing elements affecting two of the leading societies, it was decided that I must go to Seven Mile charge. The night I returned home from conference, my fine buggy horse, which I could have sold for three hundred dollars, died, leaving me without a horse and no money with which to purchase another. The charge extended into four counties, and I must hold six or seven revival meetings on a salary of \$284.00; but without complaining we packed our goods. Three teams were sent from our new charge for our goods, and in a few days we were on our new field. An old cabin house was secured for us in which to live, our goods were unloaded, and we were provided for the night. In the morning Mrs. Thomas and I went over to the house, intending to clean it and set up our goods, but, before proceeding, Mrs.

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Thomas began to examine the cracks in the logs of the cabin; to her disgust she found that the house was already occupied by living creatures for which she had no liking. In a moment there was trouble; those between whom there is no affinity cannot dwell in the same house peacefully; therefore Mrs. Thomas decided to let those having the best claim because of long occupancy, remain undisturbed, as they had not been disturbed in the years gone by. A good brother divided his house with us, giving us comfortable rooms, and we were contented. Here our younger son, Enos, was born.

The difficulty existing in the two societies was of a very critical nature; I asked the Lord to give grace and wisdom, and save me from saying anything harmful. I made no reference to the trouble in my sermons, and did not name it to any one. The congregations were large, and much interest seemed to be manifested. Finally they became restless; they visited me and wished to know what I intended to do about the existing difficulty. I replied, "I have no difficulty." "Well," they said, "you are aware that there *is* difficulty." "Oh, yes, I heard that you brethren have been conducting yourselves in a way that has greatly interfered with your spiritual life, and hindered the work of the Church." "Well," they said, "we want something done." I said, "You are not more anxious than I am." They inquired, "What do you suggest?" "I suggest that you all get right with the Lord and your contention will cease." They said, "It is thought by a good many that you are a little one-sided." "I am," I said, "entirely so; I am on the Lord's side, and when all get right with the Lord, we shall have peace. Brethren, I have never had but one Church-trial during my ministry, and that was in my first year, when I had but little experience. I promised the Lord then that I would never have another if I could possibly avoid it. I shall commence my revival meeting soon, and see what the Lord will do for us."



In two weeks from that date, I commenced my meeting, with a crowded house from the beginning. As the meeting progressed, the congregations increased until the house would not hold the people. Oh, how the Lord did inspire me to preach his word! Some persons said, "We want existing difficulties gotten out of the way first." I said: "I am doing a great work and cannot come down. I have no time to stop to settle difficulties; those you must settle with the Lord." Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit I would preach so plainly that some of my best friends became angry. I would go home and weep over it, and ask the Lord to save me from saying such plain, cutting things. I would ask for a tender and persuasive spirit; I would enter the pulpit having a suitable sermon, as I thought, but the Lord would take it away from me, and lead me to tenderly, but pointedly remove sin. On my way home I would hear my friends denouncing me, saying, "We will not endure such preaching." I would weep and pray to be released from thus offending my people. Finally I said, "Lord, lead, and I will follow." I would see prominent members in the church refuse to speak to each other. I would invite them around the altar for prayer, but with three or four exceptions they would refuse. At the close of the service, on one occasion, Rev. A. Surfase, said to Dr. Surfase, his brother, who was also a preacher, "We cannot live under this kind of leadership." The doctor replied: "You be still; let the preacher and the Lord manage this work, and all will come out well."

In this time of severe trial, I prayed earnestly for victory. It is victory or ruin. It was dark for a while, and many talked defeat; finally light began to break in. Some who were full of censure broke down under the power of the truth; I insisted on confession. The Holy Spirit tendered the hearts of the people, and victory came on the third Sabbath morning; wonderful power came upon the congregation, and Christians were led to confess

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their wrongs to God and to one another. Many who professed that they were innocent, now, under the light of the Holy Spirit, saw and confessed their wrongs. From that memorable hour the revival broke out; sinners cried for mercy, and were saved. Many now thanked the Lord for the sermons, which at the time of their delivery were offensive to those who were reprov'd. As light overcomes darkness, and as heat overcomes the cold, so the love of God overcomes hatred. It was true in this case; all bickerings were removed, and rest came to the Zion of God. I have never known a genuine revival of religion to fail to cure the most stubborn case of church alienation. A large number were reclaimed and many were converted. Many of those who forsook me in the beginning of the meeting were reconciled, and became earnest workers. Rev. J. B. Slight was my presiding elder.

### A CONVERTED CATHOLIC.

During this year at a meeting held in Cass County, Indiana, on the Seven Mile Circuit, God manifested his power in a miraculous manner in convicting and saving sinners, among whom was a confirmed Catholic, who had never attended a Protestant revival. He was induced by some of his associates with whom he was working on the railroad to accompany them to church. He was timid, and took his seat near the door, but seemed well impressed with the meeting, and was induced to attend the next evening, at which time he had a strange desire to attend all the services, each evening occupying a seat nearer the pulpit, until finally, when under deep conviction, he came and took a seat near the altar, and in a few evenings came to the altar for prayer. That evening he was converted; he sprang to his feet and said: "I used to go to the praist, and pay him to forgive me sins; but I always went away with me sins resting upon me. I came to the Lord Jesus Christ to-night without money, confessed me sins to him,

and promised to serve and obey him, and he forgave me sins, and gave me peace. I have the witness in me soul; I know me sins are taken away. The praist can no more forgive a man's sin than that dog can (a dog lying near the pulpit). I niver was so happy; no, niver!"

The annual conference of 1862 was held at Indian Village, Indiana, J. Markwood, bishop. The session was a very pleasant one; the attendance was good, and all the pastors seemed cheerful and hopeful. The reports were encouraging. This was the home of Elder Hiram Freeman, so well known and highly esteemed by all who knew him. For many years he served his conference as presiding elder, which office he filled with great credit to himself and the conference. He was a good man, a true friend and able to keep a secret. He came to his death by accidentally having been thrown under a train at Inwood, Marshall County, Indiana, on his return from one of his quarterly meetings.

At this session of the conference I was returned to the Indian Village charge, after an absence of seven years. Here I spent another very pleasant year. Although the charge was large, my salary was only three hundred and fifty dollars.

#### RUDE BOYS AT SPUNKY RIDGE.

As I was making my first round on the Indian Village Circuit, I visited an appointment called "Spunky Ridge." I was informed by the brethren that I should not be surprised if I were annoyed by some unruly young men who were in the the habit of running out in time of service. They had done all in their power to correct the habit, but all that they had done only made them worse. I said, "Brethren, I will manage the boys." My first appointment was Sabbath morning, 10:30 o'clock; the weather was cold, and the house was well filled. I had not proceeded far in my discourse when four young men arose

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and went out of the house, followed by twelve other young men. They were no sooner out of the house than I was at the door, without any interruption in my discourse, standing with my back against the door until the sermon was finished. The audience was amused at the course pursued, and whether they remembered what the preacher said is a question. The boys remained outside of the house until I had resumed my place in the pulpit, and being cold, they decided to come into the house, expecting to be severely reproved. Without offering any direct reproof to the boys, I stated that I would return in two weeks, and would try to have everything properly arranged for the convenience of all. Being a stranger, I would not be supposed to understand what was necessary to be done for the comfort of the people; "I hope all will return for the next service, especially these young people. Being young myself, I shall be pleased to meet you in all the services." I thanked them for their kindness, and dismissed the congregation. On the way home one young man, who was a leader of the band, said: "Boys, we are whipped; now I suggest that we treat that young man kindly." So they did. During the winter a revival of religion was held, in which a large majority of those young men were converted, and a large society was organized. But during the Civil War the class was greatly reduced in numbers, and finally disbanded; this was due to the fact that many of the leading men of the church were called into the service of their country; while others died, and some moved away.

### **A GRAND REVIVAL IN HARVEST.**

During this year (1862-63), I commenced a meeting at Indian Village, about the first of July; the meeting continued two or three weeks. I cradled wheat during the day and preached every evening; twenty or thirty were converted, and the harvest was gathered in good time. They said the preacher preached better than usual.

Other meetings were held during his year with grand results and manifestations of divine power.

In these meetings I was assisted by Rev. Allen Richhart, a preacher of great revival power; his voice was strong and musical, and had power in song. He was forceful in his appeals to the consciences of men. In a meeting where he assisted, and many were saved, there were two, especially, of whom mention should be made, Brother and Sister Nice; shortly after their conversion they united with the Church, and were faithful Christians. About one year after their conversion Sister Nice was called to prove the statement of the apostle, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." A few minutes before she passed away, she said to Brother Richhart, "Tell Brother Thomas, when he preaches my funeral sermon, to say to the people that I died in the faith, and have gone to dwell with God in the beautiful land on high."

One hundred and thirty-four were converted during the year. I received as salary two hundred and eighty-four dollars; the charge should have done better.

## CHAPTER XI

### PRESIDING ELDER—DISTRICT WORK.

The annual conference of 1863 was held in the city of Lafayette, Indiana. The United Brethren church having burned, the conference was held in the Ninth Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Lafayette being on the line where the Upper and Lower Wabash and the St. Joseph conferences meet, there was a large attendance from the adjoining conferences, making the body appear large. Bishop J. Markwood presided over the conference. The bishop being an entire stranger in the city, and not of a prepossessing appearance, and singular of expression, the remark was frequently made by those who did not know him, "I wonder why the Church selected that man for bishop; there are men in this body far his superior." Doctor Godfrey, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, where the conference was held, was a profound thinker, and an orator of great note. He had known Bishop Markwood in his native State, and knew that he was underestimated, that the bishop would cause them to change their views before he left the city. Quite a number of the leading clergymen of the city were present at one of the afternoon sessions of the conference, among them a noted orator, Rev. Mr. McMullen. The bishop arose and offered some remarks in his peculiar style; at this Mr. McMullen cast a smile at Doctor Godfrey, which seemed to say, "Rather light weight." Doctor Godfrey did not return it, knowing that he was mistaken in his thought concerning Bishop Markwood. Doctor Barnes, at whose home I was entertained, was not a professor of religion, but very much of a gentleman; he said

to me, "Why did the Church elect that man bishop; if he can sustain himself in the pulpit, I am wonderfully deceived." "Well, doctor, I have heard him preach some very good sermons; he may do better than you think." Sabbath morning came; the congregation was large, and we were all anxious that the bishop should succeed. After singing and prayer, the bishop arose and read for a text, Ps. 84:11, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

He said: "I am going to preach backwards to-day. I shall first notice the upright man." He had not proceeded far until by his novel style, brilliancy of thought, and the power of his eloquence he had captivated his hearers. At times by his humor and wit he would move his audience to bursts of laughter; at other times he would rise to such flights of oratory as to melt and move all hearts. Doctor Godfrey pronounced it the most masterly effort he had ever heard. There were but few that left the house of worship that day without tender hearts and tearful eyes. Doctor Barnes, on returning home, wept like a child. I said, "Doctor, what do you think of the bishop as a preacher?" He said: "Mr. Thomas, I have no language by which to express the high esteem in which I hold the man as a preacher of the word. He is the most eloquent pulpit orator that has ever visited this city." Mrs. Markwood said in my hearing, "That was one of the best efforts of his life."

This being the time of the Rebellion, there was a unanimous request from the legal profession that the bishop deliver a lecture, Sabbath at three o'clock at the court house, on "The State of the Country." This he refused to do. As often as he refused, the request would be repeated. He finally agreed that if they would come to the conference room he would grant their request. As they could do no better, it was so ordered.

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An immense crowd assembled; many more than the church could hold; the leading ministers of the city came, also those of the legal profession. The bishop occupied a place in front of the pulpit, and for an hour he swayed that large audience at will; at times he would be interrupted by bursts of laughter, at other times tears would be flowing freely from all eyes. It was declared to be superior to anything they had ever heard. Rev. Mr. McMullen, the noted orator, on leaving the church, said: "Gentlemen, I thought I could use stronger language in condemning this Rebellion than any one of whom I had ever heard; but I am now convinced of my mistake."

### RAISING MONEY TO SEND THE RELIGIOUS TELESCOPE TO THE SOLDIERS.

Rev. D. K. Flickinger made an effort on Sabbath evening to secure money to send the *Religious Telescope* to the soldiers. The lecture in the afternoon, with that of the evening, aroused great enthusiasm. As I now remember the amount called for was quite large. As there had been quite a number of collections taken already, it was thought that the demand was too great. I said to Elder Freeman, "I have given to so many interests already that I cannot give more than twenty-five cents." We agreed that we would each give that amount. When the lecture was half over we said we would give one dollar. Then the call was made for five-dollar donations; the excitement ran high, the fives rolled in faster than the secretary could record the names of the donors. I finally said to Brother Freeman, "Can we afford to give five dollars?" After counting our money and finding that we had enough left to pay our way home after giving five dollars, we decided to give five dollars each. The amount called for and more was promptly raised, after which a few patriotic talks were made, some soul-inspiring songs were sung, and we all shook hands, and, with many tears, adjourned. Doctor



Barnes said to me, "You ministers are the most liberal men I ever met, for the capital you have." I replied, "We sometimes give all we have and trust the Lord for the future." As I bade him farewell he, in tears, said, "I wish you well," leaving three dollars in my hand. I never saw the doctor afterward; I think he died a Christian.

At this conference I was elected a presiding elder, and appointed to the Berrien District. The Church in many localities had been weakened as a result of the war; many of our noble Christian men had gone away from home, from wives, children, and friends, never to return. There were divisions and strife, resulting from a difference in political opinions; but, in the midst of all, the Church lived and grew. I shall never forget the earnest prayers of wives for their husbands and mothers for their boys, on the field of battle, that they might be brave and true, and that they might be protected and return to them again, when the country would be saved from its peril. Eternity alone will reveal how much we owe to the Christian wives and mothers who, from their family altars and in their secret places of devotion, poured out their hearts in earnest prayer to God, for the success of our army when all was dark and threatening. Often the sad and heartrending news would come that a dear husband, son or brother had fallen in some fearful battle. In many such cases I was called upon to preach a funeral sermon, and what might seem strange to those who had never been called upon to pass through such an ordeal, the demand would often be made for a sermon condemning the Rebellion and Northern sympathizers. This would awaken hostile feelings, but it was not a time to consult feelings; the country was in peril and must be defended. A sorrow-stricken wife and mother, whose husband had fallen on the battlefield, sent a messenger to me asking that I preach the funeral sermon, and that I speak on the state of the country; nothing else would be satisfactory. The congregation was

so immense that we repaired to the grove. I took for my text, "Let us not be found fighting against God." There was present a strong pro-slavery man, who, during the sermon, cried out, "I came to hear the gospel and not politics." "Yes, gentlemen," said I, "tramp on a snake's tail and his head will fly." He was quiet for a time, then I made the declaration that slavery was not in harmony with the will of God; the gospel was an emancipation proclamation, and that Jesus Christ was an emancipator. He sprang to his feet and said: "I will not hear such talk; I will leave." I said: "All right, sir; if all such men as you would leave the country, or were hanged, the war would soon come to an end." He withdrew a few rods, and then halted, and heard the sermon through. At the close of the discourse a patriotic young man arose and said, "Gentlemen, we should show our appreciation of this man's service to-day by a free-will offering," which amounted to \$16.50. The deeply-affected widow of the fallen soldier came and expressed her gratitude for the words I had spoken.

### A SOLDIER WHO FELL IN BATTLE.

During the two years I was on the Berrien District, I resided in the town of M——; in that place a large majority of the citizens were opposed to the administration in its efforts to suppress the Rebellion. Nathaniel Reynolds, a citizen of the village, enlisted in the service of his country, and was engaged in a number of hard battles. He came home on furlough, and as he was about to return to his regiment, he said to me, "I shall never come out of another engagement alive." "Why do you think so?" I inquired. He said: "The fact is made plain to me; I am not scared; I shall do my duty and die at my post. I am ready; I have the consciousness that I am at peace with God." Soon after he reached the army his regiment was called to engage in that fearful battle at Murfreesboro,

and the brave man was shot through the head and died instantly. He was a noble, intelligent Christian man. His sorrowing widow called at my home, and requested me to preach a funeral sermon on Sabbath morning; she desired that I be fearless in denouncing the Rebellion, and in defending the Government. I agreed to do so. An immense congregation assembled; many more than the house would accommodate. Many were present who were loud in condemning the administration.

I chose the following text: "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." Ecclesiastes 12: 5.

In referring to the future home of the good man, I stated that it is a world whose inhabitants are loyal to the laws that are to govern them. Man by disobedience forfeited Eden; angels who rebelled were cast out of heaven into hell. God would not allow a rebel to live in heaven the one-hundredth part of a second. It is free from tyranny and oppression. God is naturally, necessarily, unchangeably, and eternally opposed to slavery, both moral and political. I said that Jesus Christ was an abolitionist; he came to break every yoke, and set the oppressed free. The gospel of Christ brings the glad tidings of liberty to all men. Just at this moment there was manifested a spirit of anger and rebellion; some used profane language, others withdrew. I continued to denounce secession in the most positive manner. I closed by comforting the bereaved widow and others who were caused to mourn over loved ones, with the thought that there is a bright land somewhere in the universe of God, whose citizens are loyal to the laws by which they are to be governed, where there are no bloody wars, no lawless mobs, and where those long parted shall meet again.

On Monday morning I walked into a blacksmith shop, and eighteen men who were present on Sabbath followed me into the shop. One of them said, "Thomas, we would

like to know what you meant in your sermon by saying Christ is an 'abolitionist.'" I said: "I meant that Christ is an enemy to all sin; he came to destroy the works of the devil, and to put an end to sin. American slavery is a sin; therefore Christ came to put an end to it, and will accomplish the work for which he came." At that moment Mr. F——, a large and wealthy man, with cane in hand, said: "Thomas, we thought you were a gentleman. We all love to hear you preach, but unless you take back some things you said yesterday, we will never hear you preach again." "Indeed, sir," I said, "I would not consider that a calamity; I consider your patronage a reproach to a civil man." He retorted, "We will never pay a dime to your support." I said, "I lived without you in the past, and can in the future." He became so angry that he trembled, and would change his cane from one hand to the other; then went off in a tirade of abuse, accusing the clergy of bringing on the war. I finally said, "Mr. F——, that sounds quite natural; the devil has been howling so long on the track of ministers that they do not become alarmed at it." He shook like a man having the ague, but continued his attack upon the clergy. I finally said, "Mr. F——, do you consider that the South is fighting in a just cause?" "Certainly, sir; as much so as our Revolutionary Fathers were," he replied. I said, "Mr. F——, why don't you go down and help your oppressed brethren?" He declared that if he should help either he would help them. I stepped directly in front of him and said: "I think perhaps I shall never have a more favorable time to tell you what I think of you than now; I think, sir, there is not a meaner, more contemptible, low-down, dirty rebel walking on God's green earth than you. The men with rifles in their hands, shooting at our boys in blue, are gentlemen in comparison to you. Your property is defended by our noble soldiers, while you are here adding fuel to the flame. You ought to be hanged by the neck to a limb." He turned purple,

and changed his cane from one hand to the other, but appeared to be almost speechless.

The blacksmith ceased working, thinking that matters had come to a fearful crisis. Not another word was spoken; the eighteen men walked away, and the blacksmith and I enjoyed a good laugh. He said, "Were you not expecting Mr. F—— to strike you with his cane?" "I was not; I did not know but he might, in his anger, attempt it, but I knew he would not succeed."

Mr. F—— would meet me on the highway and on the street, but would refuse to recognize me. I would always speak to him; after a time he became friendly. I remained in that town until the close of the war and was always treated kindly. A few of the men are yet living; they are good, law-abiding citizens.

My first quarterly conference that year was on the Elkhart charge, E. H. Lamb was the pastor. As previously stated, he was an able man, and I felt that I was but a child in knowledge and grace compared to him. I said, "Brother Lamb, won't you please take the chair and conduct the quarterly conference?" He kindly said, "Brother Thomas, you take your place, and if you want help I will help you." His sweet spirit and kind words helped me, and I succeeded finely. At the close of the quarterly conference Brother Lamb said to me: "You did well; keep humble, and the Lord will help you."

From here I went to Westfield. The circumstances connected with this meeting were a little trying; the meeting was held in the Methodist Episcopal Church. This being a college town (not our Westfield College), the president, teachers, and many of the students were in my congregation. Being young and a stranger, it was quite embarrassing, but realizing my weakness, and knowing that Christ was my strength, I trusted in him and he helped me. I delivered to them an old-time revival sermon; I said the world is hungry and dying for the bread

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of life. Jesus did not say that it is science or logic that is the bread of life, but he said, "*I am* the bread of life." The service was a good one; I really felt at home; the Lord helped me, and the people spoke tenderly and encouragingly. I went away realizing that the services were a blessing to them and to me.

### A STRANGE PRESENTIMENT.

One evening, after preaching at the place of holding the next quarterly conference, shortly after retiring, closing my eyes, I saw my little son, about five years old, coming toward the house calling to his mother, with a fearful wound in his face and neck, with the large artery in his neck laid bare, and his face covered with blood. I sprang up in bed, frightened, and felt that I must take the train and go home; but I was traveling on horseback, and could not reach home all the way by rail. Thinking that it might have grown out of the fact that I was thinking of home, I tried to content myself, but was restless all night and the following day. I noted the time when I saw the condition as above described. I soon learned that the boy had been injured by a horse that same evening and had come calling his mother, just as the scene appeared to me. If the accident had not occurred I should have said it was a dream. Through what channel it was communicated to me I know not.

My next meeting was held on the Berrien charge, where I had formerly served as pastor. Here I met many old friends; the meeting was largely attended. I was blessed in preaching from the text, 1 John 3:2. The preacher's salary was all met, but the amount promised was far too small. Arrangements were made for some donations which greatly helped the pastor and his family. This was the home of Rev. J. Surran, one of the "charter" members of St. Joseph Conference; hence well known, and for many years a presiding elder in the conference. He was a large,

strong man, with a clear, musical voice; as a revivalist, he was excelled by few, if any. Many hundreds live in heaven who were brought to Christ through his preaching. He died in 1891, and went to his reward.

Buchanan, Berrien County, Michigan was the place of holding my next meeting. This was the home of Revs. G. Sickafoose and J. F. Bartmess, who were old ministers in the St. Joseph Conference, and with whom I had spent the greater part of my itinerant life. These were faithful men of God, serving on missions, circuits, stations, and districts. They both represented their conference at different times in the General Conference. They have gone to their reward and their bodies rest in the Buchanan cemetery. The quarterly conference was held at the Galeene class; here we had some old-time United Brethren, who had come from the State of Ohio. The meeting was full of interest; several were converted and united with the Church.

From here I went to Marcellus, Michigan, J. France was the pastor. He was a good preacher, but did not always have self-control, and would speak harshly at times and thereby give offense, and was not inclined to apologize. But, with all, he was a good man, and for a number of years has been in heaven. I remained on the charge five days, assisting in revival meetings. The Lord poured out His Spirit upon the people; sinners were convicted, and many souls were converted. I next went to what was then called St. Joseph Circuit, H. Tuck, pastor. This was a large circuit, and the greater part of the year the roads were very muddy; hence, a difficult field to travel, and the salary only four hundred dollars. I made it a point to look after the financial interests of the pastor and his family. The progress the Church has made on the line of ministerial support in the past few years is certainly gratifying; and yet in many places there is room for improvement. But it is coming, and we will thank God

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and take courage. Notwithstanding the many trials and financial embarrassments of that day, there were many things to cheer and comfort the heart of the true servant of God; revivals were more frequent and extensive, and he was permitted to witness greater results of his toil in the salvation of souls.

### WHISPERING CONTROLLED.

On the St. Joseph charge the church was much annoyed by a class of unruly young people who often disturbed the minister in his discourse by whispering. They had been arrested and fined, but did not reform. I was notified by the brethren that I might be disturbed by these young people; I said, "I will get along with the young people nicely." In the evening service we were favored with a large congregation, mainly young people. The order was good. Sabbath morning the attendance was excellent, but there was some whispering among the young people. I spoke to them kindly. In the evening the congregation was much larger, and the service was held in the schoolhouse, where the aisles were narrow. A very large young man and a young lady seated opposite each other, kept up a conversation while I was speaking, and attracted considerable attention. I suggested that those who were whispering would confer a great favor upon me and others if they would cease whispering; but the conversation continued. When, in the midst of my discourse, I walked down the aisle and said, "Say, Bub, if you and Sis will quit talking until I am through, you may go home with Sis and talk until your matters are properly adjusted." This amused the young people, and the two referred to were also amused. All was quiet. When the service closed the young man and young lady were addressed as "Bub" and "Sis," and often in company would be thus addressed. As was suggested, "Bub" said, "Sis, the arrangement is that I am to go home with you, and we are to properly arrange



our matters." As they passed me the young man handed a quarter of a dollar to me, saying, "Your suggestion is worth that much, at least, to me." I had no further trouble and was treated kindly.

SIX UNRULY YOUNG MEN.

At another place on the same charge I had an appointment at the Lamb church on the Michigan Road. The church was a log structure; during the preaching on Sabbath evening six young men went out of the church and returned, repeating this interruption five times. I was patient until "patience ceased to be a virtue," and the sixth time, as they were trying to open the door, it being a little difficult, I said: "That is right, boys; I am an admirer of good manners. There are those who, when they have the 'itch' and must scratch, will do so before the congregation; but you understand rules of propriety better; you go out to do your scratching, and when you are relieved you come in, and when you find it necessary to scratch again, you get up and go out as before." The boys did not feel safe to return again that evening. One of them threatened to whip me, but forgot his threat. I have visited that charge many times since, but have never had any cause to reprove any one for misconduct.

I might continue to name all the charges—twelve in number—but will only record the fact that the year was one of earnest toil and exposure. Many days I traveled from thirty to forty miles, through snowstorms so terrific that I could not see a rod in advance of my horse. Sometimes my horse would have to wallow through drifts of snow; but the faithful fellow never failed me. I made it a rule to take care of my horse; feed, curry, and bed him. I could not sleep well when I knew that my horse that had carried me all the day was not comfortable. I remained from four to five days with the pastors, helping to save lost men and women. The district was blessed

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with some gracious revivals of religion. Souls were born into the kingdom; many of whom have left this world of conflict, and now live in that beautiful land where storms never come.

### THE COLD NEW YEAR'S DAY.

This was in 1864, in which was recorded the coldest January this country ever knew before or since. I was snowbound in Michigan. Telegraph lines were all inoperative; trains could not move for some days, and I could not hear from home, and I could not go to look after their interests, being nine miles from the railroad at the home of Moses Harshman on that New Years morning, which will never be forgotten by those then living. As Elder Surran had been at my home two days before the storm, I was determined to go to his home, thinking I might hear from my wife and children. Brother Moses Harshman, at whose home I was stopping, insisted that I would perish; I waited until the next morning, when I resolved to go. I started on horseback, having six miles to travel to the home of Brother Surran. It was so cold that trees snapped, and the sky appeared blue; not a person had been on the road. Sometimes my horse would be in snow-drifts to mid-side, but the faithful fellow baffled against cold and wind and snow until we reached the home of my friend and brother, John Surran, who in his missionary life had weathered many a storm. I was chilled, but did not leave my faithful animal until he was sheltered from the storm and cold. On inquiry I learned that my family was well on the day before the storm. As soon as the trains could run, I started for home. My courageous wife and children were alive, and, strange to say, well. On New Year's morning our house was so nearly covered with snow that it resembled a snow-bank. Without waiting for help, Mrs. Thomas opened the door and allowed the snow to come into the room that she might have a chance to work; she

worked her way out to the street, where the snow had blown off; she then worked her way to wood that was corded, but buried under the snow. This was a great victory. Yet another victory must be achieved; we had a fine swine in a pen which was covered under the snow. Mrs. Thomas worked a path through the snow to the pen, and found the pig still alive, which was the result of her thoughtfulness the evening before. As she thought a storm was approaching she took the straw out of the spare-bed tick and threw it into the pen, which prevented the animal from perishing with cold. This indeed was a year of severe trial, both to myself and family; for ten weeks I was in the pulpit every evening. My salary was five hundred dollars.

## CHAPTER XII

### PASTORAL WORK.

The annual conference of 1864 was held at the Simon's Church, Huntington County, Indiana, Bishop J. Markwood presiding. At that conference we were favored with the presence and counsel of Rev. W. J. Shuey and other visiting brethren. The attendance was large, and the reports showed a year of prosperity; the sessions of conference were highly spiritual. On Sabbath morning the church-house was not large enough to accommodate the crowd that gathered; hence an overflow meeting was held in the schoolhouse. Bishop Markwood preached an eloquent sermon, almost beyond description, in the church, and Rev. J. Thomas preached to a large congregation in the schoolhouse, from Isaiah 28:16, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." The discourse was highly appreciated. J. Surran was elected one of the presiding elders.

At this session I was appointed to the Solomon's Creek charge which I had served as pastor twice prior to this time. My first meeting was held in the town of Benton, Elkhart County, Indiana. A deep interest was felt from the first evening of the meeting; the congregations were large. The prevailing sentiment in the village was that they must have a revival. Near the close of the first week the presence of the Holy Spirit was manifest in awakening sinners. The altar Saturday evening was filled with penitents, and on Sabbath evening souls were born into the kingdom.

The work deepened and widened, and souls were saved in every service. Among those who were brought under conviction, was a Mrs. Young, wife of Sweg Young, who was not a Christian, but believed in the Christian religion. He seldom attended church, save on special occasions. Mrs. Young, a lady of refinement and intelligence, revealed to her husband her desire to become a Christian, and requested him to join her in the work. He declined, saying, "You act according to your convictions." On the next evening, as far as she knew, she surrendered to the Savior, but did not find soul rest, and on returning to her home, all being dark, she said to her husband, "I think I had better give up this matter for the present." Mr. Young said, "Wife, you have taken a step in the right direction, and will succeed." She again insisted that he join her in seeking the Lord, but he still declined, saying: "You go forward; if you become a member of the church I will pay your way and help you in every way that I can." That evening Mrs. Young was saved and Mr. Young was pleased to know that his wife had found peace. I was impressed that I should call on Mr. Young and talk to him concerning the interests of his soul. I called at his home, and he invited me to be seated, but I said: "I do not wish to be seated; I came to ask you a plain question, and I desire a candid answer." He said: "You are at liberty to ask any question you desire; if I can answer it, I will do so." "The question is this, Why are you not a Christian?" He said: "That is a pointed question, and you shall have a candid answer; I am not a Christian simply because I won't be. God has a just claim upon my service; it is reasonable that I should serve him. I might offer many excuses, but it is simply because I will to keep my heart from him." I said: "Mr. Young, I am glad to find you so candid; I should be glad to have you promise me to become a Christian." "I will make no such promise." Finally I said, "Will you take the matter under

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advisement and give it some thought?" He answered: "I will do that, sir; and if I make up my mind to become a Christian, I will come to the church and let you know." I said, "That will do," and bade him good-morning. On the second day thereafter he was in the day service and was deeply penitent. That evening he was in the congregation, and seated near the pulpit. He wept much during the sermon, at the close of which the altar was filled with penitents. As I passed by him, I said, "You are about ready to start, Mr. Young." He replied, "You go right on with your meeting, Mr. Thomas, when I get ready I will let you know." During the evening service a number were saved. The next evening he was in the service deeply penitent. As I passed him I said, "Are you about ready, Mr. Young?" He said, "Mr. Thomas, I wish you would tell neighbor Berry I desire to speak to him." I walked back and said, "Mr. Berry, neighbor Young wants to speak to you." He at once arose and walked forward and said, "Neighbor Young, what do you desire?" He arose and said: "Neighbor Berry, you and I have lived in this community many years, and have never identified ourselves with the cause of Christ; I have made up my mind to become a Christian, and desire you to join me in this work." Mr. Berry extended his hand and said, "Come on, neighbor Young." They bowed at the altar; such was the effect upon the congregation and community that many turned to Christ. They were converted at the same moment, and embraced each other, and rejoiced together. In a few years Sister Young died in the victory of grace. The meeting was protracted three weeks; about forty-five were born into the kingdom.

## CHAPTER XIII

## DISTRICT AND PASTORAL WORK.

The twenty-first annual session of St. Joseph Conference was held at Galveston, Indiana, in the year 1865, Bishop J. Weaver, presiding. The conference was much larger than when I joined it; space will not admit the mention of all the names of the members of the conference. At this conference Rev. N. Castle was taken seriously ill, but by a kind Providence, and the skillful treatment of Dr. Landry, he was restored to health. The sessions of conference were held in the church that was erected the fourth year of my ministry, and the result of the revival previously mentioned; hence a place of interest to me. On Wednesday evening of the conference, Rev. G. Sickafoose was appointed to preach, but having to serve on a committee, I was chosen to preach in his place; this was a severe trial to me, the bishop and Rev. W. J. Shuey being present. They were both good men, and knew how to sympathize with a young man who was trying to do the best he could. Although somewhat nervous when the first bell rang, after talking to the Lord about it I was composed when I entered the pulpit. The singing was inspiring, and the blessed Spirit was present to help in the service. The sermon may have been deficient, but the Lord blessed the effort to the good of the preacher and the people. The next evening the bishop preached to the delight of all. The conference with one exception was an excellent one.

At this conference I was elected to the office of presiding elder, with two others; all of whom were elected on the

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first ballot. This was a surprise to me, and a source of great embarrassment, knowing that there were older and more competent men to fill a position so responsible. I went to my room and spent some time weeping, feeling that more would be required of me than I was able to perform; moreover I had strong convictions that I should enter the evangelistic field, and give my life and energy wholly to the work of saving the lost and perishing. These convictions were not the result of the suggestions of others or a choice of my own, but, as I thought, the voice of the Spirit calling me in that direction. In fact, from early life I had a burning zeal to be in revival work. But after prayer and serious thought I consented to undertake the work to which the Church called me. I was appointed to the Berrien District.

At the annual conference held at Bourbon, Marshall County, Indiana, in 1866, J. Weaver, bishop, I was elected presiding elder, and again appointed to the Berrien District. During the year I had the privilege of being much in company with my esteemed friend and colaborer, Rev. N. Castle, who was serving as field agent for the Bourbon College. When he was with me on Sabbath, he would always refuse to preach at the morning hour, but would preach at any other hour. It seemed to me that he was not preaching with his usual ability; that was a source of disappointment to me, for I desired that the people know that we had men who could preach. When we reached the Marcellus Circuit, where I knew that the people were intelligent, he was to preach at 3 P. M. I said to him before the service, "I want you to preach this afternoon as the Lord may help you." The congregation was large. The text was: "Behold, he prayeth." I will not attempt to outline the sermon; I had listened with delight to many discourses preached by him, but none that equaled this in thought and eloquence; I regarded it one of the best efforts of his life up to that time. I neither became



vain nor envious, but thanked God for giving to the Church young men of such worth. From this time until the close of the round his efforts were not equal to his ability. Before parting I said, "My brother, you have not preached as you usually do since you have been with me." He said: "You are the presiding elder of the district, and should have all the prestige possible; you have been pastor on some of the charges on your district, and have traveled the district one year before. I am a new man, which would give me an advantage over you; it would not have been manly, Christian, or kind in me to put forth an effort to excel." Who would not admire a spirit so noble, manly, Christian, and brotherly? Such a spirit God will honor.

During these two years we had some precious revivals of religion. I had labored beyond my strength, and it was evident that I must have some release from care, being threatened with nervous prostration.

The annual conference of 1867 was held at Silver Lake, Indiana, Bishop J. Weaver, presiding bishop. This conference was one of peculiar interest; reports showed a commendable increase in membership, as the result of the untiring effort of the pastors during the year. We were delighted with the kind and able manner in which the bishop presided over the conference. His sermons on Sabbath morning and Sabbath evening were highly inspiring. His text on Sabbath morning was John 7:46, "Never man spake like this man." This was true as it related to the Savior. 1. As to what he said. 2. The manner of saying it.

I was again elected as one of the presiding elders, but owing to failing health I asked the conference to allow me to resign and take a light charge. G. Fast was chosen to fill the vacancy, and I was appointed to the Bourbon charge, composed of two appointments—Bourbon and what was then known as the Center class. This was a small charge yet a laborious one; our house of worship having

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been destroyed by fire, we held services in the Methodist Episcopal church. Our people under the labors of Rev. N. Castle had commenced the erection of a new church-house. When the building was under roof, the pastor being removed, the trustees became fearful and ordered the work stopped, feeling that they could not finish it. I first learned the names of all the members of the church, and called upon every member belonging to the class; fifty-two members demanded their names be taken from the class-book. I said: "You cannot have your names removed from the class-book now. We must take time to think, pray, and work." Rev. J. A. Cummins and Rev. G. Crouse lived in the village. They became interested in the work. Rev. J. A. Cummins and I at once bought lumber to seat the church. I kiln-dried it and purchased lath and lime, and helped to lath the church, and then mixed the plaster and carried it to the plasterers. In due time we had a commodious house in which to worship. This being accomplished, I called on nearly every family in town, told them who I was, asked if they were religious, and requested the privilege of offering a short prayer.

Though many were not Christians and some even of the Catholic faith, I was not denied the privilege to pray in any case. I invited them to come to hear me preach, as I would commence a series of revival meetings on the following Sabbath, at which time I was met by a large and attentive congregation. I continued the services five weeks; was favored with large congregations; God owned his word; sinners were brought under deep conviction, and began to inquire, "What must we do to be saved." At the end of five weeks fifty had been converted. The revival influence was felt all through the village. Having the promise of being assisted by my father, Rev. J. Thomas, I said to my people, "We will rest one week, and resume work next Sabbath." The Methodist Episcopal Church commenced the next evening, and by the next Sabbath

the revival influence was with them, and it was thought by some that we would do well not to continue; we could not expect to bring the influence back to our Church. I said, "Let our brethren work and do all the good they can; this town should be revolutionized and taken for the Lord."

My father was with us on Sabbath; in the evening he dwelt on the heinous nature of sin and the awful doom of the ungodly. The altar was crowded with penitent souls. The next service the house was packed, and many could not get in; the preacher followed with one of his revival sermons. The effect was glorious; wicked men and women who were not in the habit of attending religious services, came and were saved. The meeting continued nine weeks in all; one hundred and eighty-five were converted in the town as the result of the revival, and one hundred and two united with the United Brethren Church. Some were deeply convicted, but did not surrender to God. One, especially, of whom mention may be made, after having been repeatedly warned, refused to become a Christian at once and desired to leave off some of his bad habits before becoming a Christian. He was urged to accept Christ at once; was told that in less than six months he would be more profane than ever. In less than *three months* this prediction came true. He lived one year a very wicked life and died as he lived. I record this as a warning to others; "let us not be found fighting against God."

At the conference of 1868, Buchanan, Michigan, J. Weaver, presiding, I was appointed to what was called Clear Creek Circuit, including what is now South Whitley, Goblesville, and Pleasant circuits, embracing at that time ten appointments. There were but three church-houses on the charge when I first went to it; I usually filled three appointments every Sabbath, and often was in two Sabbath schools. Soon after I came to the charge I held my financial meeting; all the appointments were represented, and seemed pleased that I was sent to their charge

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in harmony with their request. They requested me to state what I demanded as a financial consideration; being a little timid, I asked only *five hundred dollars*. This shocked them; they thought they could not pay it; the most they had ever paid was *three hundred and fifty dollars*. I said, "All right, you do not have to pay more." Then I began to feel a little more independent, and was sorry that I had not asked them *six hundred dollars*. They finally said: "We will make it four hundred dollars. You go on with the work; we have never allowed the ministers to starve." I said: "You are abundantly able to pay what I have offered to receive as my salary. I am standing for the protection of my wife and children." Finally, they came up to four hundred and fifty dollars, and said, "That is all we will pay." I said, "If that is your decision, you had better adjourn." A brother said, "You will come out all right."

A motion to adjourn was in order, but they insisted that I go on with the work and I would come out well. I said, "That kind of work and conduct made paupers of my mother and her children; you will not do the same with my wife and children." I then opened a letter sent me from Three Rivers, Michigan, from the district I had served two years before, signed by five responsible, wealthy men, and as binding as a note, offering me six hundred dollars and a good house in which to live. I read the letter and said, "You will advantage me at least one hundred and fifty dollars if you do not meet my demands." In less than five minutes they had raised my salary to five hundred and thirty-two dollars, saying, "You are not going." I said: "I am here by the appointment of the conference, and you have met my demands and more; I am your pastor. By the blessing of God, and your sympathy and coöperation, we will see souls saved this year. The next thing, you must furnish me a house in which to live." There were three or four old cabin houses which had been vacated by their occupants to keep from freezing,

or they were driven out by other occupants with which they were not on friendly terms. While they were trying to decide which of the houses would be most convenient, I said: "Brethren, it is not worth while talking about those old cabins; I do not intend to put my family in any one of them. My wife has nearly broken herself down cleaning up such old cabins." "Well, brother, these are all the houses that we have on the charge." I said: "Roanoke is only three miles from my charge; I expect to live where I shall have school privileges for my children." They said: "We cannot rent you a house in Roanoke; it will cost at least one hundred dollars." "Well," I replied, "You get me a comfortable house, and all it costs over eighty dollars I will pay." They finally said, "You go and rent the house." "No, you brethren rent the house; I am good for twenty dollars if you pay my salary." This being settled I said: "Now, brethren, the work is large; it is necessary that you move me to the charge at once. I wish to commence a revival meeting in two weeks. One brother said, "You do not expect us to move you to the charge, do you?" I replied, "That is the law of the Church." Another brother said, "Thomas, you are a little tough." I said, "Is it harder for the whole circuit to move me than to move myself?" Seeing they were in for the moving expenses, I was moved at the expense of the charge, and in two weeks was in a revival meeting, resulting in the conversion of many, the number I do not now recall.

I at once engaged in another meeting, which was growing in interest, when, on a Wednesday night, about midnight, there was a rap on my door. I at once arose, and to my surprise I found that it was W. Penn, from Washington Center, one of the appointments on my charge where we had a small society of seven members. I said, "Why are you here at this time of night?" "Well," he said, "the Lord is at work in our community; the people are seeking the Lord all over the neighborhood; no one

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knows what it means. A formal preacher has heard of the excitement, and has sent an appointment for next Friday evening; if he gets the start, the people will be misled." This brother was past fifty years old, and had walked twelve miles in the night; the roads being almost impassable, he had come across-lots, and thus had shunned much of the mud. I sent an appointment for Saturday evening and Sabbath to continue indefinitely, and secured a brother to take charge of my meeting in which I was now engaged.

I went to Washington Center on Saturday, and was met by a large congregation. I delivered a short discourse and then invited penitents to an altar of prayer. The greater part of the audience was seekers. This meeting continued three weeks, holding from two to three services each day; at all of these services souls were saved. For our day services we met at private houses. By four in the afternoon the house would be filled; prayer service would be introduced, and by seven in the evening souls would be saved. The services would sometimes continue until ten and eleven o'clock at night; there was no call for preaching to sinners, for there had been awakened in nearly all hearts an earnest desire to be saved. At the invitation many would readily come to the altar, and were hopefully saved. No signing, of cards, or holding up of hands; but complete surrender to God. The cry was heard, "God have mercy on me a sinner." It was indeed a heart-searching time; a time of victory.

The people were so concerned that temporal interests became a secondary consideration. At one of our day meetings a gentleman from Huntington came to buy timber; the people had plenty of timber and needed money, but were more concerned about their souls and the souls of their families and friends. The gentleman would talk timber, or try to, but the people would talk of their spiritual interests. He utterly failed to purchase *one tree*. He returned to the

city and reported that the people at Washington Center had gone crazy on religion, and that there was not enough money in Huntington to purchase one tree. At the close of the meeting, after seventy souls had been saved, the gentleman returned and bought all the timber he desired. This revival was not worked *up*; it came *down* from heaven. We erected a good house of worship, and after fifty-six years, during which I have been engaged in the ministry there is yet at that place a good class numbering about two hundred. This church is near the childhood home of Bishop W. M. Bell and wife, whose pastor I was for some years.

Rev. J. S. Todd, having resigned the Roanoke station, the presiding elder, by consent of the two charges, appointed me to serve the station in connection with the circuit, making in all eleven appointments with as many Sabbath schools.

#### GOBLESVILLE CHURCH.

At the Goblesville class on the same charge we had no church-house; we were worshiping in an old schoolhouse about 16 x 20 feet. I had urged that there must be a church-house built. The township trustee erected what was then thought to be a fine schoolhouse, and the brethren thought that they could use that for religious services; but to my joy the trustee would not grant them the privilege of holding religious services in the schoolhouse. This caused the trustees of the church to rise up in their might, and they said, "We are able to build a house of worship." A meeting of the board of trustees was called at which time it was decided at once to build. By the next week they were cutting timber for the building. It was in the spring of the year, and, hitching four horses to a mud-boat, they hauled the logs to the mill to have them sawed, after which the lumber was kiln-dried, and by autumn we had quite a respectable house in which to worship. It was dedicated

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free of debt by Bishop D. Edwards. God owned the work; since that time many souls have been saved around that consecrated altar. Many of the older members have gone to their reward. There is now a large class at that place with a good church-building of modern design, costing between five and six thousand dollars.

### REV. HENRY SHUTT.

In closing the history of this year's work I wish to make mention of Rev. Henry Shutt, who moved to this country in an early day when the roads at times were almost impassable. He was an energetic, enterprising citizen, and accumulated quite a little fortune and raised a respectable family. He was an untiring church worker; the country not being well supplied with preaching at that time our local preachers were appreciated and made welcome. There were but few Sabbaths that this faithful man was not out preaching; hence he was loved and appreciated by members of other churches as well as his own. The services of no one at funerals were more appreciated than his, yet he received but little compensation. He was very liberal in the support of the gospel, and was greatly missed when the Lord called him home. Nearly all of his children have followed him to the celestial city. His son Jaboc is yet with us, and is a pillar in the Church.

The conference of 1869 was held at Roanoke, Indiana, D. Edwards, presiding bishop. At this conference I was appointed agent for the Roanoke Academy; my work, as I thought, was to solicit students for the school, but I soon learned that thirteen hundred dollars must be secured in cash and notes to meet an indebtedness against the academy. To provide for this indebtedness, a note was drawn up and signed by twenty-seven responsible men; I then asked permission to continue the canvass in that way, stating that I could get seventy-five or one hundred names to the note; but they thought that I could secure



more money to take individual notes over the conference to pay the thirteen hundred dollars, with the addition of a few hundred dollars to meet other emergencies. Owing to some misunderstanding the plan was not a success. I did all that I could to succeed; the thirteen hundred was raised. I also did what I could to secure students; in this I was successful.

At the annual conference held at Buchanan, Michigan, in 1870, J. Weaver, bishop, I was again appointed to the Clear Creek Circuit. While there had been some change in boundaries, the charge was still large, and I was expected to hold revival services at each appointment. This I did, with but little success; I worked hard, lived right, and only reported at conference six accessions to the Church. This, I think, was among the hardest trials of my life. When I read my report, Bishop Edwards said, "What is wrong, Brother Thomas; did you do your duty?" I said, "I think I did, and it did not rain." "Well," said he, "it won't sometimes, in this conference."

The next session of St. Joseph Conference was held September, 1871, at Solomon's Creek, J. Weaver presiding. At this conference I was again appointed to the Clear Creek charge; it was indeed a great cross for me to return to this large field of labor over which I had traveled so much. I never felt my need of help more than now; it drew me to the Lord in earnest prayer. I asked for a hundred souls, and the more I talked to the Lord in prayer, the more I became burdened for lost men. I held seven revival meetings during the year.

The first was held at the Pleasant Church; this was a good working society, in which there were some old-time United Brethren upon whom we could depend in time of battle. They could sing, pray, and testify; mud, rain, and snow did not intimidate them. They would go four or five miles to church. J. Simons (now presiding elder) was converted at one of the meetings that I held

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in that church. He did not need to be told that he was saved; in fact, I always kept hands off, and let the Holy Spirit do his work, whose office it is to communicate the intelligence to the soul when saved. He was bowing at the altar for deliverance, and when light broke in upon his soul he instantly arose and stood upon the altar at which he was bowing, and began to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. For three consecutive days he went out through the neighborhood, and asked his friends to come and be saved. At the same meeting a Mr. Myers was converted. He became so much in earnest that for six evenings he prayed until perspiration stood on his face. I finally said to him, "Cease your struggling." It was after an effort that I succeeded in quieting him, when he said, "Thomas, I have done everything I know to do." "Yes," I said, "you have been doing *too much*; you have been trying to force your way into the kingdom by physical exertion. You do not get in that way; you have scarcely thought of God in all your efforts. Do you promise God to give up a sinful life; do you confess your sins? Has Christ not said, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' Do you believe that he is faithful to his word? Do you believe that he does forgive you?" "Well," said he, "I want *feeling*." I said, "Hold, brother, that is none of your business; feeling is not salvation; it is the effect. Do you believe that Christ is faithful?" "Yes," said he. "To what?" I asked. He said, "To his word." "What does he say he will do?" "Forgive," said he. "Do you believe he does?" "Yes," said he. "Are you forgiven?" "He says so." "And you believe it?" He answered, "I am forgiven." "What more does he promise to do?" "To cleanse from all unrighteousness," said he. "Well," said I, "Is not that good enough?" "Yes," said he, "glory to Jesus, I am saved." And he began to shout and praise God. It was soon after the election, and in his fit of ecstasy he would wave his hand, and hallow,

“Hurrah for Jesus!” Some said it was all excitement. Well he *was* excited, and so was the *lame* man when he was healed; he “walked and leaped and praised God.” Mr. Meyers entered the ministry in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and has won many souls to Christ. The number converted in that meeting I have forgotten.

Elder N. Castle was with me one week, and preached with great power; one of his most effective sermons was from the words of Jesus to his disciples just before the crucifixion, “Sleep on now.”

My next meeting was at the Zion Church. Here we had a large society and a live church, but owing to some misunderstanding the peace and harmony of the society had been disturbed. I did what I could to remove the hindrance, that we might have a revival of religion; but after nearly two weeks of earnest effort very little had been accomplished. I knew of a brother who, through some misunderstanding, had ill feeling toward the pastor; hence did not attend the services. I paid no attention to the matter, thinking it was without any just cause. Before retiring one evening I earnestly asked the Lord to show me what was wrong; in fact, I continued to pray nearly all night. About four o’clock in the morning I fell asleep, and the Holy Spirit brought this scripture to my mind: “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.” As I awoke, I said, “Lord, I will go at once.” So taking Brother Charles Purviance with me, I went to the brother’s home; we found his good wife sick. After some religious conversation and prayer I said, “Brother, I came over this morning to ask you what you have against me?” “Why do you think I have aught against you?” “Well, you do not come to hear me preach.” He then stated his grievance; the matter was soon adjusted, and that even-

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ing he was in the service; twelve souls were saved. The meeting continued a little over three weeks, resulting in the strengthening of believers and the salvation of many.

My next meeting on this charge was at Goblesville where I continued a meeting three weeks, during which time my quarterly meeting was held. N. Castle was the presiding elder, and remained with me one week, but was not in a condition to preach, having sore throat, with which he was affected at times, but by keeping quiet he was able to hold his quarterly meeting at Roanoke the next Sabbath and returned the next Monday, preaching for me during that week. The meeting was attended with divine power, and many were won to Christ.

## CHAPTER XIV

## PASTORAL WORK—CONTINUED.

In 1872 the St. Joseph Conference held its annual session at North Manchester, Indiana, in the United Brethren Church. Bishop David Edwards presided. The conference was well attended, and the weather was fine. The reports of pastors showed a fair degree of success during the year. The religious tone of the conference was inspiring, and the business sessions were harmonious. On Sabbath morning the bishop preached with his usual power. His discourse was mainly to ministers. To some his remarks were a little severe, but they were timely. After showing what a minister of the Lord should be, he paused and said, "Brethren, this is a little close, but you pray for grace to bear it, and it will do you good." In some cases it produced the desired results.

At this conference I was sent to Roanoke Station; this was my home appointment, and I regarded the appointment unwise. Just as Elder N. Castle was starting to meet the stationing committee, he playfully said to me, "Where shall we send you this year?" I in the same spirit said, "To Roanoke," not thinking for a moment it would be so. When Roanoke was named, Bishop Edwards said, "F. Thomas." Elder N. Castle said, "Bishop, that will not do." "Why not?" said Bishop Edwards. The elder said, "That charge is in a critical condition, and is well-nigh destroyed by a division, caused by the introduction of an organ in the church services. Thomas has lived there twelve years, has been their pastor twice, also their presiding elder.

They should have an entire stranger.” The bishop said, “I have a divine revelation; Thomas must be sent to that charge.” It was so ordered. When the appointments were read, my name was read in connection with Roanoke. I immediately went to the bishop and said: “Bishop, you certainly have made a mistake in appointing me to my home charge. We have had a very unhappy state of affairs in that society for the past year; the church has been divided on the subject of instrumental music in the church service. They have antagonized each other until the church has lost its influence with the people. You should have sent one of the wisest and best men in the conference to that charge. The school there is in successful operation; hence great care should be used.” The bishop said, “Are you going to act the baby?” I replied, “I am not a baby.” He said, “Well, then go to your charge in the name of the Lord.” I said, “If you say so, I will go.”

It was said by many during the year prior that the United Brethren Church would never regain its former standing. In that church there were many good people—“old-time United Brethren”—among whom were the following: Rev. John Bash, Jacob Zent, Henry Bash, Samuel Zent, Daniel Richards, Henry Sholty, George Fast, and Solomon Dinius, with many others whose names might be mentioned. Those mentioned were good men, and the church at one time was a model church. In point of musical talent they were far above the average; they were also liberal in supporting the gospel. Indeed, there were but few stronger societies, if any, in the conference at that time. The spirit that prevailed rendered the circumstances very unpleasant for the pastor. There were various opinions as to what course the new preacher would take; would he allow the instrument used in the public worship? I was waited upon during the week by different ones, wishing to know what I proposed to do. I had spent much time in prayer, asking for divine guidance. I had learned that there are

times when it is wise to stand still and wait for divine deliverance. That was one of those times. I knew that the Master would help me. The former pastor who had opposed the use of the organ in divine worship, urged that I should not allow the instrument used in public worship. I said, "The majority must rule." On the first Sabbath, at the close of the Sabbath school, a prominent member came to me and demanded my hymns. I said, "I will give the number of my hymns from the pulpit." He replied, "The organist wishes to use the instrument." I said: "Brother, I hope you will not insist upon that this morning. Let us take three months to pray over the matter." He replied, "We will use the organ this morning." I replied, "That organ will not be used to-day." Then he said, "We will not hear you preach." I said, "You can go home if you wish." Many left, but the congregation was large and attentive. At the close of the service I said, "You are all aware that we are having difficulty on the subject of instrumental music. As the pastor of this church I shall do all in my power to secure peace and prosperity. Let this be a week of earnest prayer for divine guidance, and next Sabbath we will appoint a time when we will vote on the question. All are requested to be present.

On the next Sabbath the house was well filled. Both parties had waited on me, and tried to prevail on me to change my purpose to call a vote, as the church appeared to be equally divided. I said: "Brethren, the Spirit has marked out the road to victory; the vote will be taken one week from next Sabbath at 3:00 P. M." I invited the entire community to be present. Some said they would not support me if I called the vote. When the time arrived the house was filled. I read an appropriate Scripture lesson, then selected the well-known hymn: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!" During the singing of the hymn many were constrained to weep. After the singing of the entire hymn, earnest prayer was offered for victory,

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that the vote might bring rest to our distracted Zion. I felt that the Spirit was leading. When the votes were counted there was a majority of seven in favor of the use of the instrument. There was a disposition to cheer by the clapping of hands. I arose quickly and said: "Let there be no improper demonstrations; as you have all been invited to be present to-day, I ask that you all leave quickly." The congregation was dismissed, and all returned in an orderly manner to their homes. I wish now to give an account of

### THE REVIVAL THAT FOLLOWED.

I at once commenced a series of revival meetings; the meetings were held in the face of fearful opposition, mostly in the church. The state of the church during the previous year and the bitter feeling engendered by the controversy over instrumental music were unfavorable to a revival. It was as dark as midnight. Leading members refused to worship at the same altar. The weather was cold and stormy, but the congregations increased with every service. After having continued the battle for over four weeks, about half of the members had been in the service, and a large number of young people, many of whom were not Christians, favored me with their presence and would assist in the singing. I would say, "You young people stay by me; we are on the eve of a glorious revival." Despite the fearful storm, the congregations steadily increased, and there was a growing interest, although many did not think so. But my faith and trust were in God; I spent sleepless nights. I said: "Lord we must have victory; thou alone canst give it." And here let me say God inspired me with

### VISIONS IN THE NIGHT.

At one time, soon after retiring, I saw a child that was supposed to be dead; I said, "That child shall live." I placed my hands upon it; at once it began to breathe, and



soon arose and walked away. At another time I was in my pulpit, and saw a large number of penitent souls coming to Christ; they crowded the altar. When I awoke I said, "Surely God is coming to me in a mysterious way." The next night the Spirit wonderfully inspired me to preach the word; but not one soul yielded to Christ. After a severe trial I retired to try to sleep, but my soul was so burdened that sleep departed for a time; finally, as I closed my eyes, I saw myself again standing as before at the north side of my pulpit inviting sinners to come to Christ and be saved; as many as could kneel at the altar came, all adults. When I awoke I said: "What does this mean? Five weeks have passed and not one soul saved." That evening the congregation was large, and I presented the claims of the gospel in as clear light as I could. Still there was no move. After the service I retired, but not to sleep; the burden of my soul was so great that it drove slumber from my eyes. I spent the night in prayer until four o'clock in the morning, when in the earnestness and agony of my soul, I desired to say, "Lord, give me victory, and save this Church, and the souls of lost men, or I will never preach another sermon." But realizing how dreadful it would be to say that, I at once checked myself, and asked to be forgiven for such an improper thought, but continued to say: "Lord, it is victory or ruin; thou canst give victory."

It was now four o'clock in the morning. A sweet peace came to my troubled heart; I went into a sound sleep and did not awaken until nine o'clock. My mind was peaceful; it was the brightest morning I ever saw; all nature appeared lovely, and seemed to say, "The Lord is good." I never had a stronger desire to go into my pulpit in my life. As I walked along the street, I could see sinners coming to God. I said to Mrs. Thomas, "The revival is here; God is smiling." When I went to the church I found it filled with people. I went

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into the pulpit and read for my text 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind." The Holy Spirit helped me; I know he did. At the close of the discourse I stepped to the north side of the pulpit and invited sinners to come to Christ. Twelve Sabbath-school scholars arose at the same moment and came to the altar of prayer. They were quite intelligent; having been well taught in the Sabbath school. Four were saved. The word went out that the preacher had the children frightened; that it was all excitement. On the evening following, thirty-three Sabbath-school scholars came to the mercy-seat; the Holy Spirit came in power and twenty-four were saved. They went out into the congregation like flaming torches, took hold of the hands of wicked men, and, kneeling by their side, plead with them to come and be saved. Divine power was manifested in a marvelous manner; those hardened in sin melted like snow before the fire. Let it be remembered that it was not of man, but of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer.

The next night was a memorable one; the house was crowded to overflowing. The Holy Spirit was again present, and thirty-five penitents, the majority of whom were adults, bowed at the altar of prayer and surrendered to God. Many in the church confessed to God, and to one another, their wrongs. This was Thursday evening, and by this time the whole town was stirred, and for the next three weeks the least number at the altar any one evening was thirty-three. In this connection I wish to give an account of

### THE MIRACULOUS CONVERSION OF A CONFIRMED JEW AND HIS WIFE.

There resided in the town of Roanoke a Jew by the name of Isaac Myers, who seldom attended religious services. His wife was a Gentile, and believed that Christ was the

promised Redeemer of the world. Before their marriage they entered into a covenant that they would never antagonize each other in their religious opinions; that she would never name Christ to him, neither would he say a word against Christ to her. This vow had been sacredly kept for seven years. On Friday evening of the meeting, Mrs. Myers suggested to Mr. Myers that they go up to the church to hear Mr. Thomas preach. Mr. Myers consented to go. The Holy Spirit worked mightily among the people; thirty-three or more came to the altar as seekers, and many were enabled to accept Christ as their personal Savior.

On the way home Mrs. Myers said to her husband, "Myers, what would you say if I should go to the altar?" He replied, "Every one must do as he pleases." No more was said at that time. The next evening she again proposed that they go to the church, and on the way, just before reaching the place of worship, Mr. Myers said, Wife, were you in earnest last night when you spoke of going to the altar?" She said: "Why do you ask that question? Are you opposed to it?" He answered, "You can do as you please, but if you are going to expose yourself, I do not wish to be present." She replied, "All right; we will go to church." They were seated in the rear of the church. My theme that evening was, "Christ Crucified." I held him up as man's only hope of deliverance from sin. I dwelt especially on the final results of rejecting him. The Holy Spirit awakened the conscience of Mrs. Myers; her whole frame shook, her tears flowed freely. In the anguish of her soul she said, "Husband, may I go to the altar?" He was too proud-spirited to refuse. She came trembling to the altar; the Holy Spirit was leading. How humbly she confessed her sin of disowning Christ to please man. With assured confidence she talked with the Savior, saying, "Jesus, thou lovely one, if thou wilt forgive me, I will never disown thee." Jesus revealed

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his smiling face; the joy of heaven filled her soul. Her face was lighted up with the light of heaven. I went to her husband and said, "Mr. Myers, your wife is saved." He replied, "I allow anybody to do as he pleases." I said, "That is right, Mr. Myers." Just at that moment his wife came where we were; her countenance shining with the glory of God. Extending her arms, she said: "Oh, my dear husband, there is a Christ; though once dead, he lives! He lives in my poor heart." Mr. Myers treated her kindly, and wiped the tears from her eyes. But she repeated, "Oh, my dear husband, there is a Christ, who on the cross, died for you!" The Holy Spirit made her words like coals of fire, and burned down into the very chambers of her soul. He broke down; his tears flowed like rain. She said, "Husband, come, go to the altar, and give your heart to the Lord." He replied: "Wife, I cannot do that; you know that I do not believe in Christ, that he is the Messiah. It would be wrong for me to go there." I said, "That is right; Mrs. Myers, do not urge him further." She sat down by his side, but could not remain there. She arose and said, "Husband, may I go back to the altar?" Having his consent, she went, but the Holy Spirit soon led her back to her husband. She said, "Mr. Myers, come and stand by my side at the altar." He did so. Such a manifestation of divine power in saving men, I never witnessed before. Twenty-four souls emerged into light in a short time. Such shouts of victory, such acclamations of glory to Jesus are seldom heard on earth. Just then was sung the chorus,

"Oh, the blood, the precious blood,  
That Jesus shed for me  
Upon the cross, in crimson flood,  
Just now by faith I see."

Mr. Myers said, "Wife, I want to go home," and at once started. She reluctantly followed him to their home, and the two little boys were put in their beds, and the





Rev. Fletcher Thomas  
At the Age of Forty-five



Mrs. Fletcher Thomas

parents retired, but sleep had departed; she too happy, and he too miserable to sleep, but not a word was expressed. It was a bright, moonlight night. About three o'clock in the morning he arose in his bed and said to Mrs. Myers, "Wife"; and she said, "What do you desire?" He replied: "Before we were married you promised me that you would never mention the name of Christ to me; you never did until to-night. Now, I want you to promise me that you will never name him to me again." After a moment's thought she said, "I will try not to." "Now," said Mr. Myers, "I want you to promise me that you will never name him to those boys, as the promised Messiah." After a struggle she replied, "I will try not to." She quietly asked Jesus to help her. Mr. Myers said, "Now I want you to promise me that you will never go back to that church again." The Spirit said, "No." She arose, and looking Mr. Myers in the face said: "Myers, I loved you when I married you; I now love you more than ever before, but Jesus saved me in that church last night. I love him better than life. I'll go back to that church." Then he said, "I will leave you." He arose and dressed himself. She kneeling at the foot of the bed, said, "Jesus, manage Myers." Buttoning his overcoat, he went to the door and attempted to open it. She continued to ask the Holy Spirit to manage Myers. He turned and said, "Wife, if you go to bed and stop your praying and crying, I will not go." Oh, what a conflict! She said to Mr. Myers, "You go back to bed." She continued in prayer, and he retired, only to weep and groan until the dawning of the morning. When the morning meal was served she said, "Husband, we will prepare and go to church this morning." He tried to excuse himself, but she kindly said, "We cannot remain at home." He was so broken up that he could not resist.

There was an experience meeting that morning, and the church was crowded. The services began promptly at 9:30. This was the most memorable day of my ministry.

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God wonderfully used the testimonies of men who were saved during the meeting in convicting a large number; it was not so much *what* they said, but the presence of the Holy Spirit that accompanied the testimonies. There was no time for preaching; neither was there any demand for it. The Holy Spirit was speaking to the consciences of men, and the meeting could not well be closed before one o'clock in the afternoon, and even then it was found difficult to close the meeting. At the close of the service I arose and spoke of the two moral paths, as described by the Savior; both having a terminus—one ending in destruction, the other leading to life eternal. I said, "Sinner, whither are you going?" Then I said, "All who will this day face about and take the narrow way, stand in your places." Almost the entire congregation arose. Wicked men wept aloud. Mr. Myers arose, turned his face to the wall, and trembled like a man having the ague.

At 1:15 p. m. the people went to their homes not giving glory to the preacher, for they knew that a mysterious divine power was manifest. Mr. Myers went to his home realizing that he was a lost man. He threw himself on the carpet, exclaiming: "What shall I do; oh, what shall I do? How shall I forsake the faith of my mother? But I see, I see." His agony of soul was almost unbearable. They sent for me, and I took with me Brother Jacob Zent and Dr. Linn, both Christian men. We offered prayer, after which I said, "Mr. Myers, will you accept Jesus Christ, the crucified, as your Savior?" He cried: "How shall I forsake the faith of my mother? But I see, I see." I said, "Confess Christ." I never before witnessed such agony of soul as that man endured. With all that I could say, he would not confess Jesus as the Christ of God. We left him crying: "What shall I do, what shall I do; how shall I forsake the faith of my mother?"

This was Sabbath. The news of the condition of this Jew, and the wonderful work that was going forward created a



wonderful excitement for miles around. The people in the evening came a distance of ten miles. When I went to the church I found it crowded to its utmost capacity. The stairways were filled and the school-rooms below. I pressed my way through the crowd and finally reached the pulpit, which was also filled with people. As I stepped upon the rostrum, I said: "God is here to-night; I desire that earnest prayers ascend to the throne of God. Men and women lost in sin are here to-night and must be saved." Mr. and Mrs. Myers were seated four seats from the pulpit. I spoke that evening on, "The Life and Character of Saul," his rejection of Christ, how he was arrested, his humility, as seen in his renouncing his former religion, and his ready acceptance of Christ. Mr. Myers wept aloud. Between thirty and forty came to the altar for prayer. While souls were brought into the light of God, the Jew would cry: "What shall I do; how shall I forsake the faith of my mother?" There were but few who were not made to weep. I approached Mr. Myers and said, "Confess Christ, and he will save you." He again exclaimed, "How shall I forsake the faith of my mother?" I said, "God would as soon save a devil as you, unless you exercise faith in Christ." With greater agony he again said, "How shall I renounce the faith of my mother?" I said, "Mr. Myers, confess Christ as your Savior or be damned." At this he lifted both hands heavenward, and said, "Lord Jesus Christ, I do accept you as my Savior." As quick as thought the light broke in upon his soul. He sprang to his feet, exclaiming, "Glory to Jesus, I am saved, I am saved." Then the congregation was moved as I never saw a people moved before. Sinners wept and God's people rejoiced. The congregation sang the chorus,

"Oh, the blood, the precious blood,  
That Jesus shed for me  
Upon the cross, in crimson flood,  
Just now by faith I see."

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It was a time of wonderful power. The following evening Mr. Myers made an impressive

### APPEAL TO GENTILE SINNERS.

Taking his stand in front of the pulpit, Mr. Myers said: "Ladies and Gentlemen:—When I remember that you from early life were taught by your parents and in the Sabbath school that Jesus was the Christ, and that he died to save you, I marvel that you reject him. You say you believe it; you say that you believe he is the way, the truth, and the life. You say that you believe that he that hath the Son hath life, and he that does not believe shall be condemned; yet you reject him. I was taught to believe that he was a deceiver; I believed it, hence I was not to blame. But you have no excuse; you will have a hot hell if you continue to reject him." His appeal had a telling effect upon the unsaved. The meeting was protracted eleven weeks, resulting in the conversion of one hundred and eighty-five souls, and one hundred and seventy-five were added to the Church.

The history of the Roanoke revival will close with a brief

### ACCOUNT OF MR. MYERS AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

In 1873 the General Conference convened at Galveston, Indiana. Mr. Myers having a strong desire to attend that General Conference that he might become better acquainted with the Church, by coming in contact with so many good men, he accompanied me to that conference. During our stay at the General Conference a large number of ministers, who had read in the Telescope the account of the revival at Roanoke, and learning that I was the man who held that revival, desired that I should give an account of the conversion of Mr. Myers, of whom I had written. I said, "I can do a better thing for you; the Jew is with me, and can relate it for himself." I

called him; he came, and was introduced to the ministers. That was a source of pleasure to him and them. By the time he had grasped the hand of all those warm-hearted ministers they were all happy. I said, "Brother Myers, these brethren desire that you relate your experience, giving an account of your early training, your marriage, the agreement never to antagonize the religious faith of each other; also your late conviction, and your acceptance of Christ." This he did to about fifty ministers, who were not only delighted, but deeply affected. Soon after this Brother Myers entered Union Biblical Seminary as a student for the ministry. How long he remained in the Seminary, I do not know.

I had not seen Brother Myers for a number of years. When the General Conference, of which I was a member, was held in Dayton, Ohio, in 1893, my home was at the home of Brother Myers. At that time he was greatly afflicted with dropsy, and was failing rapidly, but he desired to live until I should arrive at his home. Having been detained by sickness in my own home, he passed away the day before I reached his home. His death was peaceful and triumphant. I earnestly hope to meet him some day on the plains of light and glory. The year of the Roanoke revival was the most wonderful year of my ministry, although the darkest in the beginning. Many of those converted in that meeting went into other States; some are yet working in the Master's vineyard, and some are at home in their Father's house of many mansions.

#### HENRY SHOLTY—TRIUMPHANT DEATH.

At the close of the Roanoke revival Henry Sholty was called from labor to reward. I formed the acquaintance of this good man on the Indian Village charge in 1856, and served as his pastor four years on different charges. I found him to be true to his God and his church, and liberal in support of the gospel; though not a rich man, he

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usually paid twenty-five dollars annually to his minister's support.

His death was triumphant; as he was nearing the hour of his departure, I asked him if he would like to speak to his son, B. W. Sholty (now of Decatur, Indiana), who was sleeping in an upper room; he replied that he would. When his son reached his bedside he was too far gone to recognize him; his wife also came and spoke to him, but there was no response; his daughter came and said, "Pa, do you know me?" There was no reply. They brought his little girl to him, but he did not know her. I stepped to his bed-side and said, "Brother Henry, do you know Jesus?" In an instant he returned to consciousness, his eyes almost flashed glory, as he said: "Yes, sir; I know Jesus; he is my Redeemer." In three minutes his spirit fled to realms of light and glory. The dying saint may, as he is closing his eyes in death, forget his dearest friends on earth, but will never forget the name of Jesus Christ who is his life, his heaven.

In 1863, at Indian Village, Indiana, Rev. F. Thomas solemnized the marriage of Miss Serena E. Sholty (daughter of Henry Sholty) and Reuben S. McFerran.

At the conference of 1873, held at Galveston, J. W. Hott, bishop, *pro tem*, I was appointed to the Solomon's Creek charge, to which was added the Ligonier territory. After having made one round on the charge I went to Ligonier. Our territory was on the north side of the river, and had been formerly occupied by the Baptists, but was abandoned. Happily I had an old friend, J. B. Foltz, living on the north side of the river, in a new addition to the city. He was a man of means and enterprise. I had formed his acquaintance in the early part of my ministry, and although he was not a Christian, he was nevertheless a believer in Christianity, and a friend of the United Brethren Church. His home was the first at which I called, but not finding him at home, I informed his wife of

my purpose to establish preaching in the north part of the city, and said I would call again on the following Wednesday. When he returned and learned that I had been at his home, and that it was my purpose to establish preaching in the new addition, he was so delighted that he wept; he was a large-hearted, noble-spirited man, but, unfortunately, the rum demon would sometimes get the advantage of him.

I called on him on Wednesday, as I had promised, and found him at home; I remained over night. Convinced as to the advisability of having regular preaching in that place, he urged its necessity, believing that the outlook was encouraging. But the great obstruction was the want of a house of worship; there was, however, an old schoolhouse that had been used for sheltering sheep. The house had no door, no windows, and no floor. Mr. Foltz and a few others who were interested, at once fitted up this building by putting in a door, some windows, and a floor, with comfortable seats, also a pulpit and lamps. In two weeks from the next Sabbath, at 10:30 A. M., I preached my first sermon from John 12:26, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." With that service I commenced a protracted meeting continuing four weeks, resulting in the conversion of about fifty, and an organization of forty-four members.

After closing the meeting at Ligonier I engaged in another revival, resulting in the conversion of many.

A third revival was at Burr Oak; here we had a small society of seven members, organized by Rev. J. A. Cummins, a fast friend of mine for many years. The outlook at this place was not very hopeful. I wish to relate here how I succeeded in persuading a clever sinner to attend church.

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Near the schoolhouse there lived a well-to-do farmer, a clever sinner, whose acquaintance I had slightly formed. On my way to the first service in the evening I saw him on the wood-pile, and drove up to the gate and called him. He wished to know what was wanted. I said, "If you will open the gate I will drive in." This being done, I said, "Mr. Long, I have services at the schoolhouse this evening and would be pleased to stay with you to-night." In a humorous way he said, "You can do so." He then invited me into his house. I said to him: "I always take care of my horse; you give me some bedding and feed." This being done, and the horse cared for, he took me into his house and introduced me to his wife. After supper we had a friendly talk; when the time for the services arrived, I said, "You will go with me to church." He replied, "I do not often go to church." "Well," I said, "we are entering upon a series of meetings here, and desire that there be a united effort." He insisted that he was not one of my members. "No," I replied, "but we must have timber out of which to make Christians; you are a clever sinner, and we expect to see you saved during this meeting. I want you to start with the first sermon." He said, "You have a hard stick of timber out of which to make a Christian when you picked on me." I said: "The Lord can do wonders; he saved Paul, who said he was the chief of sinners." He consented to go with me to the service; being a large man, and the seats narrow, I gave him a chair that was used in the desk. I stayed with him during the week, and succeeded in getting him to every service. The Holy Spirit worked mightily upon his heart until finally he and his brother, a man of influence, came to Christ and were saved. A great revival broke out, and many men and women were converted and united with the Church, adding much strength to the society.

TRUSTEES FOR LIGONIER AND BURR OAK.

The quarterly conference elected trustees for Ligonier and Burr Oak, and I returned to look after the church enterprise at Ligonier. I at once commenced to circulate a subscription for a new church; in a short time a respectable sum was subscribed, principally by men outside the church, as there were but four members when I began the work. Those who were added to the church during the revival were, in the main, poor people. There were some men of means living on the north side whose confidence was won, and they came forward with their money; among those of whom mention might be made were Rev. W. Lutz, J. B. Foltz, William Hays, Mr. Cothrim, T. Hudson, A. Fisher, Rev. John Hartzel. None of these men, save the last, were members of the United Brethren Church at this time. With this closed the work of this conference year.

The annual conference of 1874 was held at Roanoke, J. Dickson, presiding bishop. The conference was largely attended. Dr. H. A. Thompson was present, and requested an agent for Roanoke Academy. The services were inspiring; the bishop preached an excellent sermon.

At this conference the Ligonier and Burr Oak appointments were detached from the Solomon's Creek charge and called Ligonier Mission Station, to which I was appointed.

After conference the work on the Ligonier church was resumed and carried forward until the walls were ready for the roof; the trustees became fearful and ordered the hands to stop the work. I was yet living in Roanoke; Mr. Foltz at once sent me a dispatch to come to Ligonier immediately, saying, "The devil is to pay." I started as soon as possible, reaching Ligonier about 4:00 P. M., and found Mr. Foltz gazing at the walls of the church, which had been abandoned. I said, "Mr. Foltz, what is

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wrong?" He said, "The devil is to pay." I inquired, "What do you mean?" He said: "In my absence the hands have been ordered to stop the work. Thomas, I cannot see these walls standing here and have it known that J. B. Foltz had anything to do with it; it would make me stone blind." I said, "If you are not going to finish this church I will not move my family." Mr. Foltz said, "Will you stay by me, Thomas, if I will finish this house?" "Yes, sir; as long as you do right." He was appointed building committee, and was a generous-hearted man. "Thomas," he said, "I must borrow some money; will you get in my buggy and go with me?" We secured what means were needed and gave personal security. It was in the night when we arrived at home; I said: "Mr. Foltz, what do you mean in doing as you do; giving time and money to build a church, not making a profession, and indulging as you do in strong drink?" He said: "I do not know; but I feel that I must do this. The Lord has been good to me. Sometimes I say to myself, 'Foltz, you are a fool'; then I think I will give it all up, and that causes me to feel miserable. But it may be the means of my salvation; you know, Thomas, a man will be inclined to go the way his money goes." And so it was.

With the arrangements now made, the work was resumed; Mr. Foltz and his wife boarded the hands until the house was completed. I underwent some criticism for sticking to a worldling, and a man who would drink occasionally. I said: "I know my business; I shall see that man saved and in the Church before I leave here." The reply was, "Never." The house was completed, costing six thousand dollars, including grounds. The time for the dedication was set; Bishop J. Weaver was chosen to officiate. The amount needed was \$3,300.00, which was more than was thought could possibly be raised, the bishop himself not being hopeful. He asked, "Where are thirty-three hundred dollars to come from?" I said: "I



do not know, but this work is of God and must and will succeed; we will dedicate this church to-day or evening." The bishop said, "Stick to it." Not one of the churches was disposed to close the morning service. The universal decision was that we would fail, and arrangements had been made by certain parties to buy the house; but by the help of the Lord I expected victory. Bishop Weaver was at his best; he preached grandly, and helped the people, from 11 A. M. to 1 P. M.; sometimes they were laughing and sometimes they were crying. When we closed at 1:30 P. M. we were short \$1,000.00. The city was surprised at the morning offering; the bishop said, "Where will you get the one thousand dollars to reach shore?" I said, "I do not know, but the Lord will help us out."

We did faithful work in the afternoon, visiting those not at the morning service. Mr. Cothrim who, with his son William, not members of the church, having already paid one hundred and sixty-five dollars, gave one hundred more, and by the time of the evening service the amount was reduced to eight hundred dollars. About ten o'clock at night we reached shore, and the house was given to God. A large part of the means to build the house was given by men and women who were not members of the Church. Among the larger donors were Mr. Cothrim, J. B. Foltz, W. Hays, W. Lutz, Rev. J. Hartzel, A. Fisher, and T. Hudson. I wish to note that these men paid from four to fifteen hundred dollars; Mr. Foltz gave nearly fifteen hundred dollars. W. Hays, T. Hudson, and A. Fisher each gave largely, and stood by the church in after years. These were noble men, and nearly all of them became Christians. Revival services, lasting ten weeks, followed the dedication; there were thirty-three accessions to the church; among the number were Mr. Foltz, wife, and daughter, T. Hudson, wife, and two daughters. This was during my second year on this charge.

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The annual conference of 1875 convened at Bourbon, Bishop J. Dickson presiding. At this conference I was appointed to the Ligonier charge.

### BURR OAK—DEDICATION—REVIVAL.

The Burr Oak Church was now completed, at a cost of three thousand dollars; it was a beautiful, commodious brick structure. On the day of dedication it was found that six hundred dollars were needed to meet the indebtedness. Rev. J. W. Hott, of Dayton, Ohio, preached the dedicatory sermon, and after a long and earnest effort, the amount required was pledged, and the church was dedicated. It is right that I should state in this connection that many of the brethren of this place were present at the dedication of the Ligonier church, and paid from ten to fifty dollars to that church. Some of the good people of Ligonier also gave to this church.

I held another revival service at this place, and a large and flourishing society was established; this was a good society.

At both of these appointments, Ligonier and Burr Oak, we organized and sustained two of the best Sabbath schools with which I was ever associated. This charge required much work; two services each Sabbath at 10:30 A. M. and 7:30 P. M., in Ligonier, and every alternate Sabbath one service at 3 P. M. at Burr Oak, six miles from Ligonier. Then at Ligonier superintend the Sabbath school, lead the Wednesday evening prayer-meeting, and on Friday evening conduct the teachers' meeting. I was often in the Sabbath school at Burr Oak after the preaching service. The Sabbath school in Ligonier grew to such proportions that we were crowded for room. Mrs. Thomas, who stood by me so faithfully, was the teacher of the infant class, which numbered as high as one hundred and twenty-seven. The school was well supplied with papers and cards, the former from the United Brethren Publishing

House. A committee of young ladies and myself canvassed the town looking for children who were not in any Sabbath school. We treated the infant class every month to candy; this was thought by some to be unwise, but the pastor and his wife for a time furnished the candy. When the school saw that by that means children were drawn to the school, they helped to bear the expense. As we visited the homes we found many children who were timid, and their parents were not interested, but when I gave the children the Sabbath-school papers and cards and some candy, and told them that every four weeks we treated the infant class and gave them papers and cards every Sabbath, they were anxious to go to our school. Many of the parents said to me: "We had no rest after you were in our home; the children would talk about your Sabbath school and those papers and cards, so we had to bring them to-day." When they once came, we held them; they would tell other children at school, and thus our school grew in numbers. It required much work; it was necessary to instruct the children concerning improper habits, etc.

Many of our teachers were not Christians, but moral young people. I said to them: "Teach the lesson as the instructions are given in the Lesson Leaves and in the Bible Teacher; if you are not Christians, you ought to be." The subject of gospel missions was so impressed upon the minds of the children that they would pay as high as \$15.00 in a quarter to send to the heathen about whom the teachers would tell them. Some of those children are now among the leading members of the Ligonier church, and there are but few societies that pay more for the cause of missions than that church. Those were among the most memorable years of my ministry; they were years of toil and care and sacrifice. The first year the conference paid me \$200.00; the second year \$400.00. This I did not receive until the close of the year. The second year the money not being in the treasury, I had to take my pay in

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a note; hence I was compelled to sell a nice flock of sheep belonging to Mrs. Thomas. For the sheep we received \$250.00; this we sacrificed to build up the church at those two points. But while they were years of labor and sacrifice and suffering, they were years of profit, satisfaction, and experience—years to which I now look back with pleasure. Souls were saved, some of whom are now in heaven, and others are on their way doing work for the Lord. I was never treated more kindly by any people.

The third winter I held another revival meeting of ten weeks at Ligonier; those upon whom I had to depend for singing, with one or two exceptions, were unconverted, but respected the service, and were well-behaved young people. After having preached to them five weeks with little success, one evening they were all seated in front, having led the singing; I preached that evening from the text, "This year thou shalt die." Miss Ella Hays, who had led the music, was seated near me. I stopped in the midst of my sermon and said: "I think I do not care to preach to you young people longer this evening. I feel sorry for you; I have preached here over two years, and for weeks in this meeting, inviting you to Christ. You are not religious; hence it must be embarrassing for you to fill the places you occupy every Sabbath—places which only Christians can properly fill, and you dare not leave me. You have been with me in the struggle of erecting this beautiful temple; you have been so kind. Here in this church some of your funerals may be preached. Oh, how I would love to see you saved!" At this moment Miss Hays and others broke down. I said, "Won't you meet me at this altar of prayer?" They came and surrendered to Christ and were saved. Many of those who were converted at that meeting died in peace, and many others are on their way to that better country. These churches are still prosperous.

I raised from fifty to one hundred dollars each year for missions, and turned this over to the conference; also, the two houses of worship, valued at \$9,000, all accomplished without a church-fair or a social. Mr. Joseph Long, who was converted in the Burr Oak revival, and who figured so largely in the erection of the church at that place, died in the faith of the gospel in about one year after that revival. William Hays, who gave so liberally in paying for the church at Ligonier, and in supporting the cause of the Master in after years, has gone to his reward; also Mr. Cothrim, Rev. J. Hartzel, Rev. Mr. Lutz, Rev. Mr. Woodruff, and others. J. B. Foltz is still living.

The annual conference of 1876, J. Dickson presiding, was held in the new church at Ligonier, Indiana. The conference was well attended, the church was inviting, and the past year had been crowned with a good degree of success throughout the conference. I had just closed three years' hard work on the Ligonier Mission Station. A fine, Christian spirit was manifest all through the conference; no wire-pulling, as is seen sometimes, which I always detested. The bishop preached grandly, the sermon having reference to the lost sheep. At the close of the sermon Rev. L. P. Dunnick sang the "Ninety and Nine" to the delight of all.

#### WHY I LAID ASIDE MY SILK HAT.

There came to this conference a large number of young men who expected to enter the conference, and others who were looking that way. As I now remember, every one of them had a silk hat; such a display of silk hats I never saw before or since at an annual conference. I went home (as I then resided in Ligonier) and laid my silk hat away, saying to Mrs. Thomas, "That will do." I have never worn a silk hat since that time but twice; those were times when I did not have any other hat to wear.

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A good preacher may wear a high hat, but those young men have learned that it requires more than a silk hat to make a good preacher.

At this conference I was appointed to the Roanoke (Clear Creek) charge, with some change in boundaries, making the charge large and difficult to travel; but the year was one of victory. During the previous year there had been several meetings held in the interest of the "Higher Life." Much good had been accomplished, and many of God's children had been quickened and set forward in their experience. I had held the revival meetings, in which the larger part of the membership had been converted. It was evident that many of them were living in a pure atmosphere, they were more tender, more active in Christian work. Notwithstanding the fact that the great majority of them had been received into the church by me, nevertheless they in a degree held me off, fearing that I would oppose them. This was near the place where Bishop Castle received the special anointing of the Holy Spirit, of which he speaks in his experience. They had the experience, but for want of proper instruction had a very unhappy way of testifying, and had many impressions that they thought were from the Lord; therefore they rejected my counsel, and called in question my experience and my capability to teach them spiritual things. Some of the brethren who were not in sympathy with the word said to me, "We want you to expose these extremists." I said: "Brethren, I have not come here to oppose anything that will elevate the Church and bring the people nearer to Christ; that there are some inconsistencies is evident, but we must be patient and act wisely." They in their great zeal would pray for their pastor as though he had hardly learned the "first principles" of salvation. On one occasion after they had prayed that their pastor might be saved, I kindly said: "Brethren and sisters, I am pleased to have you pray for

me, but hope you will exercise as much faith in my Christian experience as possible. I have known the Lord many years; I love him to-day. I would not say one word to discourage you, but rather to encourage you in your great zeal to be good."

Just a short time before, Rev. J. A. Cummins had entered into an enlarged and blessed experience; he was so filled with the Spirit that he had a burning desire to see me and converse with me upon the subject of holiness as an experience subsequent to conversion and attainable in this life. We were old friends, hence expressed our views freely. I admitted a higher state of grace attainable in this life than was reached in conversion, but was reached by a gradual growth. We conversed until late at night, and I rather flatter myself I had advantage in the argument; but there was a feeling of unrest in my soul.

In a few days I received a letter from Elder N. Castle, written in the hotel in the city of South Bend, in which he called my attention to this sublime subject, "Sanctified Life of Faith." Every word he penned was carefully chosen and loaded with love. Knowing the man by whom they were written, they were highly appreciated. I said to Mrs. Thomas, as I read his kind words and scripture references, "Brother Castle is kind." As I was repairing my house, getting ready for my revival work, the letter was laid aside until I had leisure to examine the scripture references. My first meeting was held at the Zion class where I had been pastor before, and at that time it was regarded one of the best, if not *the* best society, in the conference, not in wealth or numbers, but in spiritual power.

As I examined the references given in the bishop's letter I became more and more interested; there was soon created in my soul a hungering and thirsting after righteousness. I was wonderfully inspired in preaching to unsaved men and women. Soon the work of conviction

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began, twelve and eighteen would bow at the altar in one evening. Still there was a feeling of unrest in my heart; no sense of guilt—I was free from condemnation, but a longing to be filled with the fullness of God. I became so deeply moved that I spent much time in searching the Word of God and asking for light. I grew exceedingly tender in the pulpit, and would find myself urging the church to seek full deliverance through the blood; so much so that I became a marvel to my people.

One Friday night I read the Bible and prayed until four o'clock in the morning, that I might receive the special anointing of the Holy Ghost. On Saturday evening I went into the pulpit with a greater sense of my weakness and unworthiness than ever; I said, "Lord, I cannot preach as I ought without the anointing of the Holy Ghost." Oh, how the blessed Spirit helped me in preaching his word. Eighteen penitents came to the altar; as I knelt to pray for one who had been at the altar a number of evenings, I found a struggle in my own heart to reach the point where I could say, "Jesus, thy will be done," for I knew that I could not fully say that. I soon forgot the seeker and the meeting; I had a soul-struggle with God for one-half hour, which language cannot express. I seemed to be alone with Christ, pleading that the Holy Ghost might have right of way in my heart and life. Just then Christ revealed himself in a small cloud having a hazy appearance; as I looked upon it, it drew nearer and brighter until it stood directly over me; it became as bright as light. I realized that Christ was in the cloud. Oh, the solemnity of that moment; a feeling of profound awe pervaded my whole being. The cloud finally drew nearer until it touched me. I went down like snow before the furnace. My feelings were not rapture, but quietness, and heavenly submission to the will of God; I was so filled with divine love that I could say all through my soul, "Thy will be done." Such sweet submission of spirit



I never knew before. The statement, "I am all the Lord's," meant more to me than ever before. I knew the love of Jesus to an extent I never knew it before; I wept for days that I had not been brought into this blessed experience years before, that I might teach others the way of the Lord more perfectly. As I arose from the altar and looked over that large congregation I found myself moved with compassion; I made an appeal to the unsaved; what I said I do not know. The congregation was at once moved to tears; my wife and daughter were occupying a front seat; I fell upon my knees before them, but did not utter a word. A wonderful feeling was brought to bear upon them and others. I then arose and addressed the church; the Holy Spirit came upon them with such wonderful power as to cause many to fall prostrate on the floor. God truly manifested his convicting, converting, and sanctifying power. This was Saturday night.

Sabbath was a great day; I entered the pulpit with a tenderness of spirit, and a holy reverence that made it a sacred place. As I arose and announced my text, my heart grew strangely tender, tears flowed freely; they were tears of joy and pity; I was willing to fail or succeed. The voice of my soul was, "Let me be little and unknown, loved and praised by God alone." I chose for my text Isaiah 28:16. I have never been able to reproduce that sermon; the Holy Spirit gave me thought and utterance; the people listened with wonder and praise. Up to this time I had not confessed what the Lord had done for me. As the Holy Spirit would impress me to urge the church to take advanced grounds, he would say, "Confess to the wonderful work wrought in you." I would say: "It is too great; I dare not claim so much; I must wait until I am tried, that I may know how strong I am." I urged the church to seek the fullness of the Spirit in every sermon. My soul had caught new fire, at least in degree; I could not keep quiet, the fire of divine love was flaming in my

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soul. Oh, how glorious it was to preach redemption through the blood, but the Spirit would whisper, "Confess that Christ has sanctified you wholly." I again would shrink because some had flippantly and unwisely used the word "sanctification"; I thought I must avoid the extremes. As the error was not of the heart, my experience remained the same until I commenced a meeting at Forest, where Bishop W. M. Bell and wife were members. It was in this society where the holiness work first broke out. Brother Bell, father of Bishop Bell, said to me: "My brother, God has certainly visited you in great power; why do you not tell the people what the Lord has done for you?" I replied, "I know my business." In an instant the light went out; I was left without the sweet soul-rest that had given me power with God and men. For three long weeks I mourned over joys departed. Oh, how I sorrowed over the loss sustained, Finally while I was praying, "Oh, God, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," the Spirit said, "Will you confess?" After a struggle I said, "Blessed Spirit, if thou wilt again dispel the darkness and fill me, I will confess." That evening, while Rev. C. Roley was singing, "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb," I arose and responded, "Yes; glory to his name! The blood cleanses me now from all sin." Oh, what victory came into my soul. I have never ceased to love that hymn, and the man who sang it. I now realize that I am wholly the Lord's, am resting quietly in Jesus. I love the dear Redeemer as I never loved him before. Love pervades my whole being; I love the Bible more than ever before; it is now a delight to suffer for Jesus. Preaching is now a pleasure; I feel for the Church as I never could before; now I can love my enemies and pray for the erring. Oh, that I had entered into this perfect rest earlier in life.

My presiding elder, Rev. A. M. Cummins, was a man of deep piety, and a clear and forcible preacher. For

some time he had been deeply exercised on the subject of Scriptural holiness; his soul was thirsting for the blessing of perfect love. When he reached the place of holding my quarterly meeting, he was so exercised in mind on the subject that before the evening service he asked to have a private interview with me. He was as teachable as a child; only desiring to know the way. I said, "My dear brother, you being all on the altar, you only need to wait for the fire; it will come—wait and trust." During the sermon that evening, the holy anointing came; he arose and testified. Oh, how he praised God; he was so filled with divine love that he could not walk without being supported. I led him to the home of a brother. Sleep left him; he rejoiced and praised God all night. In the morning, which was Sabbath, I walked by his side to the house of God. He entered the pulpit unable to restrain his emotion, but finally read from the gospel of St. John, the fifteenth chapter. He would talk awhile, then shout and praise the Lord. This was always a memorable period in his Christian life. He lived and enjoyed the experience, and died triumphantly, and is now reigning with the blood washed in heaven.

## CHAPTER XV

### DISTRICT WORK—CAMP-MEETINGS.

The annual conference of 1877 was held at Dayton, Indiana, Bishop J. Weaver presiding. This was the home of Rev. J. M. Hershey, a charter member of the conference. He was a man of some financial ability and punctual in business matters. He served a number of years as branch missionary treasurer of the conference. As a preacher he was clear, earnest, and at times eloquent. He was true to the government of the United Brethren Church, and served for several years as presiding elder in this conference. He was a good man and died in the faith of the gospel he preached. His death occurred in 1878.

The conference was harmonious and very spiritual. Rev. D. K. Flickinger, corresponding secretary of the missionary society, and Rev. D. Bender, agent of Otterbein University, were present and gave good counsel. On Sabbath morning in the Presbyterian church, Bishop Weaver preached an eloquent sermon to the delight of all. At this session "lay delegation" was adopted in this conference. I was elected presiding elder and appointed to the Berrien District, over which Bishop Castle presided at the time of his election to the office of bishop. He remained on the district until the close of the conference year. By his kind, affable spirit, spirituality, and power in the pulpit, he had won the hearts of all on the district. I could not hope to serve the district with the acceptability of my predecessor, but, having resigned all into the hands of my Master, I dared not tremble for fear.

My first quarterly conference was at Buchanan, Michigan, November 1. The quarterly conference was pleasant, and the Sabbath a good day because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The quarterly conference was followed by special services in the interest of heart purity, and I remained one week. I then went to my next quarterly meeting and returned to Buchanan on Monday night and remained another week. The meeting was one of deep interest. Rev. R. P. Burton was the pastor. It was on this charge that he sought and entered into the blessing of perfect rest. I shall never forget the longing of his soul to be filled with all the fullness of God. At the close of my sermon on Sabbath morning, having spoken upon the subject, "A Believer's Consecration," he arose to take up the usual quarterly conference collection for the presiding elder. He was all broken up, and with many tears he said, "I never felt that I wanted to be wholly sanctified and set apart to the service of the Lord as I do to-day." After saying that sixteen dollars were needed to pay the presiding elder, he continued, "I want your prayers; I desire to be all the Lord would have me be." Then, proceeding with the collection, he said, "I hope you will throw in liberally to-day," but he was overcome by the earnest longings of his soul after the fullness of the Spirit. The entire audience was moved to tears. The collection was larger than the sum named. It was not long until the baptism came upon him—the blessing of entire sanctification. He preached it, lived it, and became a bright light in St. Joseph Conference. His sweet spirit, close walk with Christ, clear and convincing sermons, his many tears for the welfare of Zion and the conversion of sinners, his untiring efforts as he went from one district to another, will never be forgotten. He will be remembered as the "weeping Jeremiah" of this conference. His death occurred at Etna Green, Indiana, November 22, 1903, and the funeral services were held at North Manchester, conducted by Dr.

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W. M. Bell, and the interment was in the North Manchester cemetery. At the time of his death he was the presiding elder of the Warsaw District. Rev. J. A. Cummins was appointed by Bishop E. B. Kephart to fill the vacancy. Rev. R. P. Burton was a plain teacher of the Word of God, and a dear friend of mine. In his death the St. Joseph Conference lost one of its best preachers and clearest teachers on the doctrine of holiness. Blessed man of God! Occasionally I go and scatter a few flowers on his grave, and kneel and pray. I expect to meet him on the plains of light.

### BERRIEN SPRINGS.

The next quarterly conference was on the Berrien Circuit, near the home of Elder J. Surran. Here I was pastor the first year of my itinerant ministry. The attendance was large on Sabbath, the weather was pleasant, and the services were of unusual interest. Here I met many with whom I had worshiped twenty-five years before when in the morning of my itinerant life. Some of those who were then in the Church are now in heaven, and others well advanced in years. On Sabbath morning I read the fifteenth chapter of St. John and commented on the first fifteen verses. I was blessed in speaking to the people, and the people were blessed in listening to the Word.

At this place I had the privilege of meeting a grand old saint of God, who had been a great source of strength to me in my early ministry. I had not met her for twenty-five years, and, not having heard from her for a number of years, I supposed she was in heaven. On reaching the place I learned that she was yet living, but a great sufferer, and had been confined to her couch for three years. I called on her on Sabbath afternoon; my own mother could not have rejoiced more to see me. She called me her boy; I found her cheerful and happy. In conversing with her I shaped my conversation so as to call out her best sentiments, for she was a Christian of rich experience. Referring to her

suffering, I said, "Mother Pernell, it is too bad that you must lie here and suffer so long." "Too hard, do you say; too hard? The three years that I have been confined to my couch have been the happiest years of my life. I have had the sweetest communion with Christ, clearer and richer revelations of his character and glory." I said, "You are alone much of the time, are you not?" "My friends cannot always be with me, but I am never alone; He that promised, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' is with me to comfort and support. I am patiently waiting for my release—am ready at any moment." This was a blessed and most inspiring hour. This saint of God was soon after released from suffering, to live in a mansion in Father's house. Time and space will not allow me to notice definitely all the meetings held on this district.

My first meeting on the second round was held at Berrien Springs. On Sabbath evening the sermon was on purity of heart. At the close of the discourse I invited Christians to the altar of consecration; between forty and fifty were soon at the altar. I remained one week, and many professed to receive the fullness of the Spirit; others received pardon and had passed from death unto life. One sentimental Christian said in her testimony that she was saved from temptation. A minister of no ordinary ability, from Ohio, arose and rebuked her. He told her that she was fanatical; that Jesus himself was tempted. I arose and said: "Brother, you misinterpret the sister's meaning; she did not mean that she was saved *from being tempted*, but saved from the *power of temptation*. The Hebrew children were not saved from going *into* the furnace, but were *sustained* in the furnace. God's power was seen not in keeping them from being cast into the furnace, but by keeping them from being harmed by it." The influence of this meeting was felt not only on the part of God's children, but upon the outside world as well.

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### A GREAT VICTORY AT SODUS.

I learned on reaching the quarterly meeting at Sodus, that there were some of the brethren on the charge who had said that if I preached upon the doctrine of holiness on Sabbath, they would withhold my pay. Before the evening service I received a letter from a minister, containing a reply to a sermon that I had preached in Berrien the Sabbath before, on "Entire Sanctification." This drove me to the Lord, that I might know his will as to what I should do. I must not swerve because of opposition, nor must I preach on the subject simply because I am opposed; I earnestly asked the Spirit to make my duty plain. On Sabbath morning the charge was well represented; the minister who had written the reply to my former discourse was also present. It was made clear to me that the Holy Spirit would have me show believers their privilege in Christ. I asked the people of God to lay aside their prejudice and as far as possible give me an unbiased hearing. Such a hallowed influence came upon the congregation as to overcome in a great measure the opposition that had existed. My own heart was strangely warmed; it seemed that the Lord helped me as never before. The world grew light around me, but in the midst of the victory that the Holy Spirit was giving me, Satan made his appearance, and said: "You are preaching a great sermon to-day; the people think well of your effort." I gathered myself, and said, "Devil, it is none of your business." He fled and, oh, what victory the Spirit gave me; the opposition was overcome and the victory for holiness was gained. They paid more in their free-will offerings than at any former time. This was near the home of R. P. Burton in his boyhood days.

### A FEARFUL SNOWSTORM.

My next meeting was to be held on the Bangor charge. The place of holding the meeting could not be reached by railroad. There being the appearance of foul weather, I



started on Friday and tarried Friday night at the home of Mr. De Long, a brother of Rev. J. W. De Long, fourteen miles from the place of holding the quarterly meeting. That night there came a terrific snowstorm; such storms occasionally come in Michigan. The snow in the morning was twelve inches on the level. Mr. De Long said to me, "Elder, you cannot reach your meeting to-day." "Yes," I said, "I never disappoint. You take me on horseback four miles to the home of a brother," whose name I cannot now recall, "and I will get him to accompany me the other ten miles." "All right," said Brother De Long. Soon we mounted our horses and away we went, but not very fast. Brother De Long took my grips so as to make it as easy for me as possible. In a reasonable time we arrived at the brother's home. He was surprised to see me, and said, "Do you expect to reach your meeting?" I said, "I do." "How do you expect to get there?" "I expect you to go to the quarterly meeting and take me with you. We can, by going on horseback, arrive there in time."

His wife decided to go to the meeting also, and she was as decided as I was. I said, "A team cannot get through with a sled," but she said to her husband, "Hitch to the bobsleds; I am going." I had lived long enough with a woman to know that there was no use to debating the question further. Soon the brother drove up in front of the gate and called, "All aboard!" In a few minutes we were on the way. We had not driven more than two and one-half miles until it was evident that we could not succeed. I said, "Your wife had better remain here with a neighbor until you return." But the good sister was intent on going to the quarterly meeting. We left the rear bob, and, taking the frame of an old trundle-bed that was leaning against the fence and fastening it to the front bob, we filled it with straw and were soon on our way. By noon we reached our destination. Notwithstanding the storm, we were favored with good congregations. Here I found a large number of

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devoted Christians. The love-feast on Sabbath morning was inspiring. Rev. M. Dalrimple was the pastor; he was a young man of brilliant talent and was exerting a fine influence.

### CURED OF SLEEPING IN CHURCH.

I held a quarterly meeting in the Arlington church, on the Bangor Circuit; I remained one week, assisting the pastor in a revival meeting. I made my home with a good brother by the name of Payne, who was faithful in attendance at church, but would invariably go to sleep as soon as he was seated and remain quiet during the entire service, for he seldom awakened until the preaching closed. One evening before starting to church I asked him if he would let me have two russet apples. He said: "Those cannot be eaten until toward spring; I will give you some first-class apples." I said, "I wish the russets." He insisted that I could not eat those, and I insisted upon having what I had requested. Finally he brought them, and as I placed them in my pocket he said, "Thomas, what do you want with those hard apples?" I said, "If you go to sleep to-night while I am preaching, you will learn what I want with these hard apples." He said, "You will not hit me with them, will you?" "I will, sir; you must hear the word preached." We went to church and the good brother took his seat as usual. During the sermon his eyelids would become heavy, but he would think of the russet apples and straighten up, so I kept him awake every service during that week. The brethren asked, "How do you manage to keep Brother Payne awake?" I said, "With russet apples." Brother Payne was a good man, and I believe he has been in heaven these many years.

The annual conference of 1878 was held at North Manchester, Bishop J. Weaver presiding. This was an interesting session of conference. The reports were good, the conference chart for this year showing a membership of

6,671, a net gain of nearly three hundred. The bishop's sermon on Sabbath was inspiring. At this conference I was reëlected presiding elder and again appointed to the Berrien District.

During my second year on the district I at times suffered from the loss of voice, which was a new experience to me. Sometimes during the week I could scarcely speak, but when the time for preaching would come my voice would be given me. So I continued for some months, until a company of earnest Christians covenanted together to pray for the restoration of my voice. This was a source of great encouragement to me. It was not clear to my mind that it was not a thorn given to me on account of the wonderful manner in which God had manifested himself, lest I should become exalted. When I reached the Buchanan charge it was not certain that I would be able to speak. I went to my room to ask the Lord for help. I heard a voice saying: "Why do you want your voice? Is it for the pleasure of talking, or that you may honor Christ and save men?" After a struggle in prayer, I became calm and peaceful; I reached a point where I could say: "Lord, glorify thyself; if it would be more to thy glory that I lose my voice, amen; if it will glorify thy name more to restore my voice, let it be so." The worry was all gone. When I entered the pulpit and began speaking, I found that God had heard the petitions that had gone up in my behalf, and I praised him for his wonderful love. The following Sabbath I went to the Berrien charge again, where the covenant had been entered into, to pray for the return of my voice. They had not learned of the wonderful deliverance that had been effected. When I arose and began to speak with a clear voice, many were moved to tears, and as soon as the service closed they came to me and asked, "When was your voice restored?" and I said, "One week ago." They replied, "For this we have not ceased to pray since

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you were with us at your last meeting." I said, "I thank my Heavenly Father for kind Christian friends."

### METHODIST EPISCOPAL CAMP-MEETING.

The camp-meeting was held a number of miles north of the city of Niles, Michigan, on old and established grounds where meetings are held yearly. Having a day and a night that I could spend, I called to enjoy the meeting. The attendance at this meeting was large and the clergy well represented—forty-two ministers in all, including college presidents, editors, and presiding elders. There was very little religious interest, and no souls saved. I had just come from a meeting where the people were alive to God and the interests of Christ's kingdom. On the camp-ground I met those to whom I had preached at different places on my district, not only of the United Brethren Church, but of other denominations. Unwisely a request was sent by some who knew me to those who had charge of the meeting, that I should preach that evening. I tried to quiet those who were urging the matter, but could not. The elder who had charge of the meeting that evening came to me and said, "Brother, you must preach to-night." I asked to be excused, as I was weary and had just come upon the ground, but he insisted, as the demand had come from the people, that I preach that evening. I asked, "On what line are you preaching?" He replied, "On the line of salvation."

When the hour arrived for evening service, I found myself surrounded by forty-two ministers. The presiding elder arose and announced the program for the week, stating that in the morning the presiding elder from the adjoining district would preach at nine o'clock. "Elder —— will preach at 10:30, Elder —— will preach at 2:30 P.M., and Elder —— will preach at 7:30 P.M., so you see we have quite a sprinkle of presiding elders. We will now have the pleasure of listening to a discourse by

Elder F. Thomas, of the Berrien District, United Brethren Church." Just behind me I heard a whisper, "Now it will go." I was in such a state of mind that it caused me to feel sad, as the spirit that characterized the meeting seemed to be vain and empty. In the afternoon of that day there had been a meeting in which the doctrine of entire sanctification had been discussed, and by many of the ministers opposed. After having been introduced, I arose with the prayer upon my lips and in my heart, "Holy Father, help me to honor the Son and the blood to-night." I said: "Beloved, I am an humble ambassador for Christ; I am not here to exhibit a presiding elder; it is not office that makes a minister acceptable in the eyes of God or a blessing to a lost world. The angel said to Jacob, 'Thou shalt have power with God and with man.' We as ministers need to tarry at Jerusalem until we are filled with the old Jerusalem fire." I said: "I inquired of the leader of the meeting on what line you have been preaching. He said, 'Salvation.' By the help of the Holy Spirit and your prayers I will dwell on the subject of '*Full Salvation.*'" More than two hundred amens were heard. I selected for my text Isaiah 62:10, "Lift up a standard for the people." The outline of my sermon was as follows: 1. The standard; 2. The danger of lifting it too high; 3. The danger of placing it too low; 4. Where placed, or what is full salvation? 5. How obtained? 6. Its evidences. When I was closing my sermon I felt the divine presence; that Christ was exalted, the blood honored, not by the effort, but by the truth. I invited those who desired to enter into such an experience to stand; sixty or more arose quickly.

As I was not the leader of the meeting, the elder in charge called on a brother who had professed the blessing of perfect rest to conclude the service. He went on to show what Doctor Clark, Wesley, and others said on the subject of "Entire Sanctification." My soul was too full to be quiet. I said, "Brother, please tell the people

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what Jesus, Matthew, Paul, and all the apostles say about it." This caused a sensation that language cannot describe. The preacher who was speaking was set on fire by the Holy Spirit; some praised God; others manifested a desire to enter farther into the stream of cleansing. There being a large altar, I said, "Brother, invite the people to the altar of consecration." The elder said, "We will repair to the boarding tabernacle for an after-meeting." This was not what the people desired, but the tabernacle was crowded to its utmost capacity. An effort was made to arrange an altar, but the elder said, "The people can bow where they are." Two prayers were offered; then it was turned into a testimony meeting. The people were requested to be brief. This was done with a view to avoid definiteness, but the work could not be suppressed. Some Spirit-filled Christian would say, "Glory to Jesus"; another, "My soul is thirsting to be filled with the fullness of God." At this a preacher arose and said: "I am tired of hearing Christians talking about themselves while sinners are perishing; it is time that we forget ourselves and look after the unsaved." I said: "Brother, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Tarry ye at Jerusalem till'—till what? Until 'ye be endued with power from on high.' We are told that Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost and with power, and much people were added unto the Lord." Another minister arose and said: "When the Lord pardoned my sins, he saved me from all carnality, and I was made perfect in love." I said: "My brother, you surely were a favored child of grace; all of God's dear children cannot claim as much as you. You should sing the 'long-meter doxology' every day. You should help these Christians to the high attainment you have enjoyed so long."

I was requested to hold an after service for those who were inquiring the way more perfectly. I thought this would not be prudent, and so declined. I left early the next morning. The second day after I left, the



Rev Fletcher Thomas  
At the Age of About Sixty





elder expressed thanks that they were able to keep down all extravagance and fanaticism along the line of holiness. I was told that they succeeded in grieving the Holy Spirit, and the meeting died on their hands.

The next year the same elder presided at the camp-meeting, and I was informed that in the beginning of the meeting he made a statement concerning what had occurred the year before, that the Spirit had been grieved because many were thirsting for the fullness of the Spirit and were not encouraged, but rather hindered. This year the doctrine of heart-purity shall have prominence, and so it did. A grand revival followed.

The next annual session of St. Joseph Conference was held at Berrien Springs, Michigan, September 3-6, 1879, Bishop J. Weaver presiding. This was the most spiritual conference in its history; we had time to sing occasionally and get happy during the hours of conference without interfering with the business of the conference. We were greatly helped by the presence of Rev. J. K. Billheimer and other visiting brethren, and these brethren in turn were helped by the spirit that prevailed in the conference. Bishop Weaver declared that the spirit of harmony and brotherly love existing at that conference was marvelous and glorious. A missionary meeting was held in the afternoon on Sabbath in the interest of the Woman's Missionary Society. This was an unusually enthusiastic service; the addresses were inspiring. I never saw money more freely contributed; those in the gallery asked the women to hold baskets and hats, and the offerings were given freely and in large sums. Acclamations of praise were heard from many lips. Giving became a means of grace.

The harmony between the older and young ministers at this conference was such as to attract the attention of many, especially the visiting brethren. There was neither jealousy nor scheming; all sought to know the Father's

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will, and go out from the conference with a burning zeal for the salvation of the unsaved.

### EVANGELISTIC TENT.

At this conference it was thought advisable to purchase a large tabernacle and small tents, and employ a company of gospel workers to hold evangelistic meetings for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of believers. To the astonishment of some, I conscientiously objected to this movement, believing that notwithstanding the fact that the motive was pure and the end sought helpful to the Church, yet nevertheless it had the appearance of evil, which is to be shunned lest our God be evil-spoken of. After a little thought and prayer this plan was abandoned.

At this conference I was again elected presiding elder and appointed to the Lafayette District. The glorious victories we had achieved on the Berrien District prepared me for the work before me; I entered upon the work of the year with a purpose of heart to do a faithful year's service for the Lord. I was favored with good health and a consciousness of the Spirit's presence and help in preaching the word of God; the people were quickened and set forward in their Christian experience and life, and many sinners were saved. The pastors on the charges were good men, and labored with an untiring zeal for the salvation of the perishing; their labors were blessed. I remained where needed from five to six days, assisting in revival meetings.

The annual conference of 1880 was held at Bremen, Indiana, Bishop J. Weaver presiding. This was also a good session of conference. Here I wish to give a short extract from my annual report of the Lafayette District. "We held our district holiness meeting at Galveston, June 5. All the ministers were present but one. The meeting was blessed to the good of all who participated in it. Some sought and entered into a better experience.

I think the district is enjoying a better religious state than in past years. Our people are becoming more fully consecrated to the work of the Master; many have entered into the experience of perfect love, and others are inquiring the way....The year to me has been one of holy toil, but earnest triumph. I have lived and labored with a view to God's glory and the good of souls. I have preached the truth without regard to the smiles or frowns of men. I have enjoyed great peace of mind; I think I can say to-day that Jesus saves me....Here permit me to add that there is but little indebtedness on any of our houses of worship on the district. There have been donated to the ministers on the district Bibles amounting to \$103.50, one of which was donated to your humble servant by the ministers of the district." Bishop Weaver was presented with a Bible by the ministers of the conference.

At this conference I was elected presiding elder and appointed to the Manchester District.

In September of this year (1880) the following letter from Bishop Weaver was published in the Telescope: "There appears to be a desire, with a settled determination upon the part of nearly all the members of the conference, to go up higher in Christian experience. With a hearty good will they often unite in singing, 'Nearer, my God, to thee.' There have been frequent baptisms of the Holy Ghost, such as I seldom witnessed during conference sessions. My brother, there is a divine fullness in gospel salvation. If any one should doubt this, let him turn to Ephesians 3:18-20. Here Paul talks of the 'breadth, length, and height of the love of Christ and all the fulness of God.' This is wonderful; yes, it is wonderfully glorious, and gloriously wonderful; but it is just that state into which the Holy Ghost will lead all who will trustingly consecrate their all to Christ. It is a present, full salvation, complete in all its parts. There is nothing

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that so well qualifies ministers for conference work as the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It sweetens their disposition, makes them firm and bold, yet humble. Where this grace abounds every interest of the Church will be looked after. The fathers of the United Brethren Church started out with the consciousness that a vital union with Christ is essential to a life of godliness. From this central idea we cannot afford to be divorced. We must hold to it, not simply because the fathers taught it, but because Jesus taught it."

### UNION CITY CAMP-MEETING.

The Indiana State Camp-meeting Association held a camp-meeting at Union City, Indiana. This meeting was largely attended; the different denominations which affiliated with the association were well represented both in the clergy and the laity. The doctrine of entire sanctification as a work wrought in the human soul by the Holy Ghost subsequent to conversion did not meet with the sanction of all religious people in the city, but we were treated with Christian courtesy. The meeting was attended with unusual power from the first service; from twenty to thirty clergymen were in attendance. The Sabbath was a great day; the attendance was immensely large. The weather was fine. The experience-meeting in the morning was one of great interest to God's people, and many sought and found completeness in Jesus. At 10:30 A. M., Dr. Foot, of New York City, preached a most eloquent sermon, defining most clearly the teaching of the Bible on heart-purity. The effort was accompanied with power, and many Spirit-filled souls were heard to give God the glory. At the close of the sermon many of God's children bowed at an altar of consecration, and many entered into the blessed experience of perfect love.

At 3 P. M. I preached to over four thousand people on, "The Bible Standard of Holiness." At the close

Dr. Foot took charge, and as he spoke of the possibilities of grace, and the power of the blood to cleanse from sin, a mysterious divine power came upon that vast congregation. He said: "We have here represented pastors and members of the different churches; perhaps we are not all we should be, and may be by grace. We may have had some bickerings and jealousies among us as pastors and members; hence the Holy Spirit has been grieved. Shall we not come closer together to-day?" "I wish," said he, "that the whole congregation might stand." As that vast audience arose, he said, "I wish those in front would move forward to the stand, and those behind them move forward, and so on until this vast assembly moves forward." As Rev. C. Roley and wife, those charming singers who have sung the gospel all over this country, led in song, the people began to move until the whole congregation moved forward. The leader requested that every minister and every Christian look up, and out of an honest heart say: "Jesus, I do this day, now and forever, consecrate my life and all my redeemed powers to thee; apply the blood, cleanse me from all pride, envy, malice, and from all coveteousness." As hundreds of sincere Christians looked heavenward and uttered the above prayer, the Holy Ghost came upon the assembly. Cries of penitents and shouts of glory were heard in different parts of the audience. They were then asked to shake hands. The ministers moved by divine impulse, went out into the congregation asking men and women to surrender to Jesus. Strong men wept like children. As I grasped the hand of many of the unsaved, they broke down under the power of the Holy Spirit, and shed tears of penitence; many were lifted into a better life.

The evening service was one long to be remembered; wonderful power attended the song-service conducted by Professor C. Roley and wife, who could sing more gospel than most of us ministers could preach. I

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delivered the evening sermon; the theme was, "Justification, Regeneration, and Entire Sanctification." At the close of the sermon, Rev. S. W. Keister, the United Brethren pastor, arose and asked the privilege to speak. He said: "I have not been wholly in sympathy with the teaching of the pulpit on the doctrine of sanctification during this meeting. I have not aimed to antagonize, but have desired to know the truth. I love the Lord, but am now convinced that there is a higher plane of Christian experience for me to occupy. I now desire to go to that altar and definitely consecrate my life to Jesus. I desire that my wife, Rev. F. Thomas, and Professor Roley and wife, bow with me and help me." I said: "Brother Keister, I heard you say on these grounds that you had fifty members in your church that you had never heard pray. I presume they are nearly all here to-night. I suggest that you invite them to meet you at this altar of consecration." With deep earnestness he began entreating his people to meet him; they moved at once. Over one hundred Christians came and fell down before God. Many of the unsaved yielded. Seldom has such a demonstration of divine power been witnessed as on that memorable occasion. Sinners were saved, and believers received the fullness of the Spirit. At the midnight hour Brother Keister was still pleading for the special anointing of the Holy Spirit. I said, "Brother, we will go down to your tent and stay with you there." He said: "No, you all go to rest; I will fight it out on this line." Those whom he had chosen could not help him much. When Rev. Mr. Meek, the Methodist Episcopal pastor, went and placed his arms about his neck and tenderly spoke to him of the power of the blood, they embraced each other and wept like children. With uplifted hands he plead for the indument of power. All at once the holy anointing came. Oh, how he gave praise to God; he spent the night in praises. I went to his tent early in the morning and found him yet praising God. He said, "I will

read the 34th Psalm, and I want you to pray." He would read, then praise the Lord, saying, "Why did I never see the beauty of this psalm before." This was a glorious meeting, and continued two weeks.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PASTORAL AND DISTRICT WORK.

The next annual conference was held at Indian Village, August, 1881, Bishop J. Weaver presiding. This was an "harmonious session." On Thursday evening Rev. D. K. Flickinger, D.D. lectured on missions. On Friday evening Bishop Weaver preached from Matt. 11:29, 30. On Sabbath morning at 10:30, he preached from 1 Cor. 13:12, "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face." He started out by saying: "We shall look first at the *now* and *then*." It was a powerful discourse. On Sabbath evening Rev. J. A. Crayton preached to a crowded house from the First Psalm.

At this conference I was appointed to the Columbia City Circuit, consisting of four appointments, Fairview and Washington Center appointments from the Whitley charge, and Columbia City and Eaton appointments. This was a heavy charge; I had traveled over the territory before, had organized the Washington Center class and built the church-house. Having been in district work for four years I had no horse, and did not feel able to purchase one. A good brother, J. Bechtol, furnished me a horse part of the time; the remainder of the time I walked to my appointments. Sometimes I would preach at Washington Center at 10:30 A. M., then walk eight miles, preach at Columbia City at three o'clock, then walk eight miles and preach in the evening. I held six revival meetings during the year. I did not have as much success that year as I desired, or as was usual in my ministry; there was not as



great success attending the preaching of the word throughout the conference as in previous years. Yet some souls were saved on my charge. During the year, by request, I held an evangelistic meeting of three weeks at Ada, Ohio, making in all seven revival meetings. My salary this year was \$500.00, with presents additional amounting to \$52.00.

During this year I attended two camp-meetings, one at Decatur and one at Warsaw; in both of these meetings, as well as the one held at Union City, M. C. Harter and Daniel Deeds rendered valuable assistance in caring for the tents and other financial interests. Mr. Harter is one of the active members of the United Brethren Church at Warsaw. "Father" Deeds, as he is familiarly called, is now well advanced in years, but is hopeful, and like Enoch, is "walking with God." He has done much for the cause of Christ and the church at Warsaw.

#### DECATUR CAMP-MEETING.

In September of this year (1881) I attended a camp-meeting at Decatur, Indiana; concerning this meeting I wrote the following account which was published in the Highway of Holiness: "It was my privilege to attend the camp-meeting held by the Indiana State Holiness Association at Decatur, September 9, 1881, which continued ten days. The meeting was conducted by L. B. Kent, of Illinois Methodist Church, assisted by members of the association. The greater part of the membership of the churches in Decatur was opposed to the meeting, although they were greatly deficient in spiritual power. There were a few who were interested in the work, and gave it their influence. Rev. Mr. Metts, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Rev. Mr. Dustman, of the Evangelical Church, tented on the ground, and did what they could to influence their people to take higher grounds. The first service was held on Tuesday night, conducted by Brother Kent. The divine presence was

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manifested; a number of persons were at the altar as seekers of heart-purity. On Saturday much of the time was spent in earnest praise. On Saturday night the meeting was highly spiritual, and a number were saved. Sabbath morning at eight o'clock we had a blessed season of grace; many testified to God's saving and cleansing power. At ten-thirty Brother Kent preached from 1 Thes. 5:23, 24. The preacher was all aglow with the love of Jesus, and the doctrine of entire sanctification was presented in a clear and impressive manner. At 2:30 Brother Linch, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, preached from the words, "Let us go on unto perfection." The sermon was full of sympathy and instruction. In the evening a large congregation assembled and was addressed by the writer, on the subject, "Scriptural Holiness." At the close of each service persons were invited to the altar, both for pardon and purity; many came and were saved. This Sabbath day will never be forgotten by many who were present. It was a day of victory. Glory to the Lamb! During the second week the attendance was larger, the interest of the meeting steadily increased, and believers and sinners were converted.

On Friday night we were visited by a fearful storm. The tabernacle was blown down during the service. One of the center poles broke and fell among the people, the large brace poles fell in every direction, the canvas fell over some of the congregation, but not a word or cry of excitement was heard. As soon as the canvas was lifted they commenced singing and praising God. Not a soul was hurt; it was one of the grandest displays of God's preserving power I ever witnessed. By Saturday at ten o'clock the tabernacle was up again and ready for services. At ten-thirty a discourse was delivered, after which an experience-meeting was enjoyed, many testifying to the cleansing power of the blood. At 2:30 the usual services were held. Quite a number of seekers were at the altar

for pardon, and some for perfect love. Two were brought out of darkness into light. Some professed the blessing of sanctification. At night the audience was large. Rev. Thomas Harrison, known as "the boy preacher," delivered a stirring sermon to the unconverted. A number came and knelt at the mercy-seat; some were converted and some sanctified.

Sabbath morning came; the sun shone brightly and all were filled with praise. At 10:30 Brother Kent preached to a large and attentive congregation. His sermon was on heart purity. The effect was most gratifying. The unbelief of many was removed, and a victory for holiness was gained. At three o'clock and at night, Brother Harrison preached. The people listened with deep interest. Some were saved. The sermons of Brother Harrison were delivered in the interest of the unconverted, yet he invited those who wished a clean heart to come to the fountain of cleansing. The meeting did not close until late in the night, as souls were crying for pardon and full redemption in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. A. J. Cummins, of the United Brethren Church, was with us, and rendered valuable assistance. I am happy to say to the friends of holiness that the work in Indiana is moving forward. The work meets with opposition, but in God we trust. More than ever I realize the great want of the Church. God says, "Be ye holy for I am holy." Christ wants a pure Church. Every minister of Jesus should enjoy and preach full salvation to his people. He should teach it as a blessing to be sought and obtained subsequent to conversion. He should urge it as a present duty, as a present privilege. There are those who will preach and talk holiness at camp-meetings who are seldom, if ever, heard to say a word on the subject in their own pulpits. God is not pleased with such cowardice and deception. He wants faithful men. It may cost a minister something to become an advocate of heart-purity, especially if he is

earnest and presses it upon the attention of the Church. He will likely be regarded as a disturber of Israel, and be denounced as a holiness hobbyist. Possibly it may cost him his reputation. But what of it? Jesus "made himself of no reputation," etc.; Christ "endured the cross despising shame," etc. Paul said to Timothy: "Preach the word; tell the world of the wondrous power of the blood of Jesus to save." We should see to it that we are filled, then we shall be living epistles, known and read of all men. Brethren, we have those in our congregations who are groaning for full redemption. They are looking to us to help them. Are we doing our duty? Do we know Jesus in his fullness? Blessed Holy Ghost, sanctify us wholly. Jesus saves me; all glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

#### WARSAW CAMP-MEETING.

The Indiana State Holiness Association held a camp-meeting near Warsaw, Indiana, annually for a number of years. These meetings were largely attended, and were made a blessing to the churches that participated in them; St. Joseph Conference shared largely in the influence that these meetings exerted upon the Church. Her people were brought closer together; such a hallowed influence went out from these meetings as to greatly increase the attendance at our public services. There was a marked improvement in the liberality of our people, and we found it easier to carry forward the financial interests of the cause of Christ. We made it a point to secure teachers who were competent to teach, men of head and heart-culture, such as the Reverends McDonald and Inskip, Rev. David Updegraff, Dr. Foot of New York, and Bishop J. Weaver of Dayton, Ohio. I have not space to notice the different meetings held at this place, but one should have special mention. The leaders were Dr. Foot and Bishop J. Weaver.

Dr. Foot was a man of culture, a sound theologian, and enjoyed a deep Christian experience; to know him was to love him. Bishop Weaver, who was so universally known, preached to the delight and profit of all. The meeting was largely attended from all parts of the country. The three years that the bishop had attended the meetings greatly improved his spiritual power. At these meetings the bishop conducted several consecration meetings, in which many of God's faithful children were brought into the blessing of perfect love. The last sermon he preached, and the circumstances that followed, will never be forgotten by many who heard him. His sermon was on the power of the blood. It was acknowledged to be the most convincing and soul-inspiring sermon that had been delivered in the meetings; in fact there were but few in that vast audience who were not made to weep. Now and again responses were heard from different parts of the audience. Just at the point of deepest interest in the discourse, the bishop said: "I shall have to close, as I must take the train. When the train is passing these grounds in a half-hour, I will come out on the platform. I desire that all who will, wave their handkerchiefs." When the bishop was about to leave, going east on the Pittsburg R. R., Dr. Foot arose, unable for a moment to speak, but finally said, "Blessed man! I feel as though I should love to put my arms about him." The bishop arose, and throwing his arms around Dr. Foot, said, "I will help you, Doctor." As they were both gray with years, and bathed in tears, standing before that large audience, all hearts were moved. The bishop then waving a farewell to the congregation, went to the depot, and Dr. Foot followed with remarks on the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin. The tide did not recede; the Holy Spirit descended and shed divine influence upon all hearts. As the train was passing, the bishop stood on the platform, his gray locks waving in the breeze, and not

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less than two thousand white handkerchiefs were waving in the air. Some wept, some laughed, and others praised God. When the train was out of sight they commenced singing. Oh, what victory was given! Do not tell me that it was fanaticism; I only wish that we might resurrect the camp-meetings for the promotion of Scriptural holiness.

Following is an extract from a letter written by Bishop Weaver, addressed to Mr. J. Hoke, and published in the *Highway of Holiness*, October, 1882: "Yes, our camp-meeting at Warsaw was a grand, good meeting. The dear Master was with us all the time. A full and present salvation was the theme from first to last. How wonderfully this experience of perfect love sweetens the spirit and tempers the words of those who possess it. How beautifully it brings us into harmony with the will of God. This is that soul-rest of which Jesus speaks that we shall find under his yoke; it is that rest into which the believer enters of which Paul speaks, Heb. 4: 3—a present rest, full and complete. It is the amen of the soul. . . . When a man has made a full consecration, and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he is so much like Christ and so little like the world that he has no taste for worldly associations. To him Christ is all and in all. . . . As soon as I can find time I want to write what I can, urging our dear people to go up into a purer atmosphere where the light is never dim."

August 23, 1882, the annual conference convened in North Manchester, Indiana, Bishop J. Weaver presiding. The sessions of conference were pleasant and harmonious. After an eloquent and inspiring sermon by Bishop Weaver, the following ministers were ordained: F. M. Truex, I. G. Knotts, W. Lower, J. A. Farmer, W. H. Bast, C. W. Pattee, J. S. Miller, D. Showley, R. W. Hutchinson, J. W. Albright, H. Clark, C. A. Brigham W. H. Pentice, W. M.

Bell, and J. D. Coverstone. This was one of the largest classes ever ordained in this conference.

At this conference I was elected a presiding elder and appointed to the Berrien District. This district was composed of eleven charges. A good degree of prosperity was realized, but it was a year of financial pressure; hence the pastors were more or less embarrassed. Nevertheless they were faithful, and witnessed some ingathering of souls. I assisted in revival work during the year at all the points as far as possible. We witnessed some glorious revivals. On the Berrien charge I spent ten days with the pastor, J. S. Cleaver, in revival meetings. The Holy Spirit was graciously poured out upon the people. On one occasion, in the midst of the sermon I asked every Christian to move to the front of the church; they moved at once, leaving a dividing line between the Church and the world—Christians and sinners. I took my place between them. In this division of the congregation there was a separation of families—husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters. As I called attention to the final separation in the judgment day, many wept aloud. I called for a surrender to God; many came to the mercy-seat and found salvation. Quite a number of God's people consecrated themselves to Christ and his service, and found completeness in Jesus.

Another gracious out-pouring of the Holy Spirit was realized at Marcellus, Michigan. I went to that place early in the week and joined in a revival meeting, holding my quarterly meeting on Sabbath and remained until the next Friday. The power of the Lord was wonderfully manifested in convicting and saving souls. The congregations were large. Near the close of the first week I said, "I must now leave and go to my quarterly meeting," when a beautiful little girl of only five summers, seated on her mother's lap, said, "Mamma, is that preacher going to leave?" "Yes," was the mother's reply. Bursting into tears she

said, "I must shake hands with that preacher," and springing from her mamma's lap, started for the pulpit, crying bitterly. As she was coming, Sister Davis said, "What is the matter with Mamie?" She answered, "I want to shake hands with the preacher." She gathered the child in her arms, and brought her to the stand. As I took her in my arms I said, "My little girl, what do you want?" She said, "I want to love Jesus." Strong men wept.

On going home the little girl related to her father many things the preacher had said in his sermon. She asked him to bow with her in prayer. Before leaving I went to the book-store and purchased "Pilgrim's Progress," and gave it to her, which she has since read. The history connected with this circumstance is the following: Fourteen years prior to this occurrence I held a quarterly meeting in Marcellus. Mr. Sherman, the father of the little girl named, was given up to die, having as was supposed consumption. I was requested to visit him; I did so. While in his home I was convinced that he did not have lung trouble, but bronchial affection; after much talk I prevailed upon him to allow me to take his case to Dr. Heatwood, of Goshen. The doctor, after a critical examination of the case, located the difficulty as I had said, and in six months restored him to health. He was not a Christian then, neither was he at the time of the meeting to which I referred, but kept himself from the house of God. He knew that it was through my interposition that his life was prolonged. I sent him word that he was indebted to me, and I desired that he should come to hear me preach; he finally came, and was wonderfully moved during the service, but could not be prevailed upon to come again, and said to his wife that he dared not go. I followed him by my prayers, and God spared that angel child to save her parents. Through her influence her mother was soon led to Christ, and died in the victories of faith, leaving Mamie to stay with her father. When



she was sixteen years old I visited Marcellus again; she was yet a Christian, but through association had become a little cold in her religious life. I prayed with her, and tried to encourage her to be faithful as a Christian. I purchased a beautiful Bible, and presented it to her, and said: "Mamie, if your father is ever saved, it will be through your influence. You must read a chapter every morning out of this blessed Bible." To this she and her father both consented. On leaving that home from which God had taken the mother and five children, I said: "Mr. Sherman, the Savior has left this girl with you to lead you to the cross; if you are ever saved, it will be through her influence. And if you do not let God lead you to the cross through this last member of your family, he will likely take you or her away." In a few months he was converted. Through the influence of this little girl and the sermons he heard preached at Marcellus, a man at the age of seventy-five years was brought to Christ. When he heard the little girl say, "I love Jesus," he arose and said: "I think when God sets the babies to talking, it is time that we aged men should do something; by God's help I shall surrender my life to Christ," and was soon saved. A few months later, while on a visit to a friend, after attending a service, he retired for the night, and before morning he closed his eyes to earth and opened them in heaven.

DISTRICT HOLINESS MEETING.

The district holiness meeting of Berrien District of St. Joseph Conference was held at East Elkhart, Indiana, commencing June 26, 1883. All the ministers on the district were present but three; also Brother Simons from the Warsaw District cheered us with his presence. Brother Rhodes, evangelist of the Methodist Church, was present, and rendered assistance. Sister Abbie Mill, of Rockford, New York, was also with us. She is an amiable

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Christian lady, and a clear teacher of the doctrine of holiness. The meeting was one of peculiar interest, and but few were found to oppose the work. Many were hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The altar was usually crowded with seekers after heart-purity. Seven or eight professed the blessing of perfect love during the meeting, and many hearts were refreshed and caused to rejoice. Many thought that it was the best meeting that they had ever attended. There was a perfect union of feeling, and harmony among the members of the different churches who attended. No meetings are so well calculated to unite the hearts of God's people as those held for the promotion of holiness of heart. The church at East Elkhart was greatly strengthened. Brother Miller, the pastor, is a zealous worker, a prudent but earnest advocate of entire sanctification. As a result, his people are brought nearer to Christ. I am happy to be able to record the fact that all the ministers of Berrien District are taking advanced grounds in Christian experience, which better qualifies them to feed the flock of God. It will be a great blessing to the church of Christ when more of the ministers enjoy and preach salvation from all sin; when from every pulpit the church is urged to go on to perfection. No doctrine is more clearly taught in the Bible. The command of God is, "Be filled with the Spirit." This is not only counsel, but is as positively commanded as is, "Thou shalt not swear." When God commands us to do a thing, it is the strongest evidence that we can do it. If God commands me to be filled with the Spirit, it is my duty to be filled with the divine fullness. If we are not filled with the Spirit, we shall be weak and shall accomplish but little; hence, if we are not filled with the Spirit, our guilt might be equal to the good we might do if we were filled with the Spirit, therefore it is the duty as well as the privilege of every minister, and of the whole church to be filled with all the graces of the

Spirit. Souls are perishing all around us, which we might save if we had a closer walk with God. We, the ministers of Jesus, are to lift up a standard for the people. Our people will follow if we lead the way. Let "Holiness to the Lord" be our motto.

The next annual session of our conference was held in the city of Lafayette, Indiana, commencing August 22, 1883, Bishop Weaver presiding. The attendance was good, and the reports of pastors showed an unusual degree of prosperity and much improvement in the spirituality of the church. Forty-five charges were reported to the conference, an increase of nine charges in seven years. My salary this year, including presents, was \$680.00.

During the conference week the following pulpits in the city were filled: Wednesday evening, United Brethren Church, J. Simons; Thursday evening, United Brethren Church, E. Seithman; Friday evening, Baptist Church, Bishop Weaver, text, Colossians 2:10, "And ye are complete in him." Saturday evening, United Brethren Church, J. T. Keesy.

#### SABBATH SERVICES.

At the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, 11:00 A. M., Bishop Weaver delivered the conference sermon from the text, "His name shall be called Wonderful," Isaiah 9:6. Owing to the lengthy introductory service, especially the rendition of some special music by the choir, the bishop could not commence speaking until about 11:30, giving the ministers who were appointed to preach in other churches in the city time to close their services and hear the sermon. As the bishop arose, some who did not know him cast a knowing look, as much as to say, "A back number." But he was self-possessed, as he announced his text slowly. Some of us had heard him preach from that text before, but never as on this occasion. A member of the church said, as

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he was passing out of the church, "That was the most wonderful sermon ever preached in that pulpit." The bishop held their attention for one hour and ten minutes. Some time after this he was invited by that church to give them one Sabbath, which he did, and for his services they paid him \$50.00 as an expression of their appreciation.

At the close of the morning sermon, Rev. J. L. Goshert was ordained, J. Surran and I assisting the bishop in the ordination service.

At this conference I was elected a presiding elder and again appointed to the Berrien District. During the year I assisted in revival services. At Pleasant Valley on the Marcellus charge, G. W. Sickafoose pastor, it was necessary that I remain and assist in his meeting. On his way from church he was thrown from his sleigh and injured, so that he was unable to carry on his meeting. A brother came for me, and I took charge of the meeting on Monday evening and continued with them over the next Sabbath, that being the time of my second quarterly meeting on that charge. The pastor was exerting a good influence in the meeting when he was injured, but the church did not relinquish their hold on God, and many of the young people in that place were won to Christ. Sabbath-school teachers earnestly labored for the conversion of their scholars, and as a result, whole classes were converted and brought into the Church.

At this place a young lady, Miss Louisa Howard, became somewhat impatient because a certain person for whom she had earnestly prayed was not converted. She was an intelligent, devoted Christian, and was consecrated to the service of God. On one occasion, as I was preaching on the power of the "Prayer of Faith," I noticed that she was greatly moved; she sat wringing her hands and weeping very much. Finally she arose and said, "Elder, may I ask a question?" I said, "Certainly." "If I ask the Lord

in the name of his Son for what is in harmony with his will, should I not expect to receive it?" "Certainly," I said. She said: "I asked the Lord to save all the young men in my Sabbath-school class, and they have all been converted; but there is a man in this community, the father of these two girls here, for whom I have prayed earnestly; I believed he would be converted then. But to-day he is less inclined to become a Christian than when the meeting commenced." With tears and a spirit of seeming impatience, she said, "It does seem to me that God ought to have answered my prayers." I said, "Louisa, if you live long enough you will learn that God is not a servant, and you a master, sending God around on errands for you." She sat down and wept bitterly. I closed my sermon and dismissed my audience; she came and asked me if I would dine at her father's home that day. I consented. As I was seated in the parlor she said: "Elder, I think I learned a lesson to-day I shall never forget; I believe I was trying to send the Lord on errands for me, and I became fretful because I did not get an answer at the time and in the way I demanded. From this day I will remember that God reserves to himself the right to determine how and for whom he will answer prayer." This lady is a sister of Cornelius Howard, a delegate to the General Conference of 1901, and an aunt of Rev. A. T. Howard, the missionary. She was married to Rev. D. Sumner, who at one time was a member of St. Joseph Conference.

Here I formed the acquaintance of Rev. J. L. Parks, at that time a member of the Methodist Church. He and his wife occasionally taught school; he was also a fine mechanic, but he did not prosper; he met with defeat at every point. At one of our quarterly conferences we were without a secretary. Brother Parks was requested to serve as secretary, which he did very acceptably. I went to his home and said: "My brother, God has a work

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for you to do; you never will prosper at anything else; your work is in the ministry." This fact his church had failed to recognize. Rev. G. W. Sickafoose, the pastor of our Church there took an interest in him. During the year he united with our Church, and the same year was licensed to preach by the quarterly conference. His first sermon was at Berrien Springs. He has since served some of the most important charges in the conference. His second charge was North Manchester, where he remained three years, doing successful work. From there he was sent to Ligonier where he remained four years. His next charge was Elkhart, where he served four years, having marked success in revival work. From Elkhart he went to Los Angeles, California, where he served as pastor until he was elected presiding elder, which office he now fills, having charge of the California District. I was his presiding elder at Ligonier and Elkhart.

Berrien Springs was the next charge I visited. Rev. I. S. Cleaver was the pastor. The meeting was almost all that we could desire. The pastor and his good wife were cheerful as usual. The pastor and presiding elder were paid in full. The fruit of the consecration meeting held the previous year was gathered in the revival that followed.

### DISTRICT HOLINESS AT NAPPANEE.

Our district holiness meeting was held at Nappanee, Indiana. Nearly all of the ministers of the district were present; there was harmony in sentiment and desire. The congregations were large at every service. The subject of entire sanctification was given prominence in the sermons delivered. Everything that looked toward extravagance or fanaticism was guarded. The Holy Spirit was present, and many of God's children were strengthened. They consecrated themselves to the service of the Lord. All the ministers led the way, and many of the laity followed; as a result our quarterly meetings were largely attended

and were seasons of grace. The people and preachers were brought closer together. There was a spirit of brotherly love as never before. Our financial interests were not neglected, and pastors received their salaries. Those were years of spiritual triumph.

**DISTRICT SABBATH-SCHOOL CONVENTION.**

The convention held its session at Breedsville the last days of May. The session was pleasant and profitable. All the ministers were present but three, and performed their part in a way that showed diligence in preparation. Rev. C. Brigham, from Columbia City Station, was present, and contributed much to the interest of the convention.

The annual conference of 1884 convened at Centenary, Whitley County, Indiana, Bishop J. Weaver presiding. For eight consecutive years he had been with us, and was a great inspiration to the conference. The devotional services were held in a large tent owned by Rev. R. J. Parrett, the evangelist. This conference was very spiritual from first to last. No jealousy on the part of the ministers; they had definitely consecrated themselves to Christ, and had reached a high plane of Christian experience. The conference was a means of grace to those in attendance.

At this conference I was again elected a presiding elder and appointed to the Lafayette District, consisting of eleven charges.

**GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1885, FOSTORIA, OHIO.**

In November, 1884, the following ministers were elected delegates to the General Conference held at Fostoria, Ohio, in May, 1885; F. Thomas, J. R. Brown, J. F. Bartmess, and H. A. Snapp. The conference was one of deepest interest owing to the fact that a commission had been appointed to revise the Constitution and Confession of Faith of our Church. I wish here to insert an address that I made in that conference:

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ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE,  
FOSTORIA, OHIO, MAY, 1885.

“I do not wish to detain you by a long speech. I seldom make a speech. I have been listening to this discussion with much attention. Excellent speeches have been made on both sides, and revelations have been made to me of which I was ignorant when I came here. I joined the United Brethren Church when I was a boy sixteen years old. A large portion of my friends belonged to a sister denomination. After carefully reading the Book of Discipline, I made choice of this Church rather than the sister church to which I was more inclined at first on account of my relatives. I liked some of the peculiarities of this Church. At four different times the sister church came to me and offered to place me anywhere in one of their colleges, pay my way until I should be satisfied with my education, if I would agree to give my labor to that church. My brother tried hard to prevail on me to do so. My brother-in-law, who was a Methodist minister, tried to prevail on me to do so. My father said to me, ‘What do you think about it?’ I said: ‘Father, I am in heart and sympathy a United Brethren. I am opposed to slavery, I am opposed to secrecy, and some other things that I named, and I would have to sacrifice my faith and my affections; and, tempting as the proposition is, I shall stay where I am.’ I do say I have never taken into the Church a member belonging to a secret order, except where he promised that he would yield submission to the law of the Church; never, except one time, when I was deceived.

“I now want to say to you, sir, that I am willing for any change that promises peace on a religious basis or gives assurance of any measure that I can see will protect the distinguishing features of this Church touching this vexed question. I prayed God to come with me. I am not stubborn. I prayed God to keep me to the right and my



spirit sweet. I have kept still, and I am sweet to-day. Here are delegates with whom I have labored all my life. I love them, but I do not see the question as they see it. I think I see the motive that lies back of this paper. I care not what your arguments are; I try to get back to the motive and decide accordingly. I am ready to vote; and should you debate this question until doomsday, I want to say to you, it would not change my decision until I am convinced that the motive is different from what I suppose. Jesus looks back of it all to the motive and judges it accordingly.

“Do not understand that I call in question the purity of the motives of the brethren. They may think it is best to bring certain measures into this Church. There is a design to accomplish an end. Some of my brethren said to me, ‘How will you vote?’ I said: ‘If you want our law on secrecy changed, vote that paper; as for me, God helping me, I will never consent to it. I will consent to any reasonable compromise.’

“And now I want to say to you that the sentiment of the Church is not always expressed by the delegates. I have never raised any trouble in our conference, but, as long as my conscientious views are as they are, I shall be opposed to letting this evil into the Church. I am not going to censure my brethren. I am going to feel religious. I expect to be a United Brethren until I die, and stand in defense of the principles of this Church.”

Packerton was the place of holding the annual conference of 1885; Bishop E. B. Kephart was the presiding bishop. This was his first episcopal visit to our conference. His firmness manifested in bringing order out of confusion at the last General Conference was also manifested somewhat in the conference. He soon came to be recognized as an able parliamentarian. The conference was pleasant and harmonious. The following resolutions were adopted:

“Inasmuch as the United Brethren Church in Christ is

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advocating all the principles of her Master, and has grown to be a large Church, and has come to that period in her history that she must of necessity lay a broader foundation so that she can obey her Master, who said, 'Go ye into all the world and teach all nations,' therefore,

*"Resolved,* That we, as a conference, indorse the action of the late General Conference and that we will support the Commission by our vote and influence.

*"Resolved,* That we return our most sincere thanks to Bishop Kephart for the kind and able manner in which he has performed the duties of his office."

I wish also to give this extract from my annual report at that conference:

"Another year's work is done. The record is made and the book is closed, but it will be opened after a while. If I have been faithful and true, it will be well; if I have failed, I can only hope in the mercy of a kind and loving Savior. It is now thirty-two years since I became a member of the St. Joseph Conference. Brothers Wells, Surran, and Snapp, I believe, are all that remain who were members of the conference at that time. Many of our brethren have gone home. More than ever do I desire to work for Jesus and the salvation of perishing men. Ten years of my ministry have been spent in district work. As I have all the oversight of young ministers, I have always felt the great responsibility. Some of those young men have grown to be able ministers of Jesus, and are with us to-day. Wherein I have failed in counsel and example I ask to be forgiven. I have always felt the need of more spiritual power. Eight years ago I was led more definitely to consecrate myself and all to Jesus. While at God's altar, with my heart all broken up, I was enabled to believe. Just then the baptism came; yes, it came. Oh, the preciousness of that hour! Oh, the sweet rest that came to my heart! Glory to Jesus, it remaineth! The past year has been one of toil and anxiety, but to-day I have peace.

Brethren in the ministry, the past few years have been years of consecration and victory in our conference. Our hearts have been more tightly bound together as we have dedicated ourselves to God. Satan will divide us if he can; let us watch and pray; we need more of Christ and less of self."

At this conference I was elected presiding elder and appointed to the Warsaw District, composed of eleven charges. This was to me a year of earnest toil. In the commencement of the year I thought to do less preaching than had been my custom, but as I looked out over the field I found so much to do I could not well keep quiet while men were dying in sin and required help. Besides filling appointments on my district, and assisting in holding protracted meetings, I assisted in holding three extra revival services, embracing a period of eight weeks. God was with us to save souls.

During the year on the Indian Village charge was held a district holiness meeting, which was a source of great strength to those who participated in it. We were blessed with the counsel and labors of Bishop N. Castle, which added greatly to the interest of the meeting. My salary this year was \$654.76, presents \$7.50, and for evangelistic work, \$73.10.

Our next annual conference (1886) was held at Bourbon, Indiana, Bishop N. Castle presiding. This was the first time he had presided over his own conference; it was indeed a pleasure to have one of our number who had grown up in our conference, and had been elevated to the office of bishop preside over us. His meek and quiet spirit exerted an influence that was lasting. At 11:00 A. M., on Sabbath he preached to a large and appreciative audience on the subject, "The Prophet Jonah and his Ministry." At the close of the sermon the following ministers were ordained: D. F. Sommer, C. A. Spitler, W. H. York, W. P. Faylor, J. A. Groves, G. T. Butler, J. N.

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Myers, and W. H. Alldaffer. Dr. Hott, editor of the *Religious Telescope*, and Dr. Warner, Missionary Secretary, were present, and gave good counsel and much encouragement. The net increase in members was 996.

At this conference I was again appointed to the Warsaw District. I found it necessary to preserve my strength as much as possible; the great need of help at so many places so appealed to me that I found it difficult to take needed rest. Besides holding my quarterly meetings I assisted through the week in revival services. I also held three revival services extra. One remarkable meeting was held in Albion, the county-seat of Noble County; G. T. Butler was the pastor there. Religion was at a very low ebb; they had not been blessed with a genuine revival of religion for many years. At the request of the pastor I arranged to assist him in the meeting commencing on Monday evening before the quarterly meeting and to continue through the week following and possibly through the next week. I arrived at the time promised and soon learned that a very able minister had moved into the town, and had entered into a partial agreement to hold a joint meeting. As I had all the work I ought to do, I said to the pastor, "You have help enough, so you will excuse me." He insisted that I stay and preach, if but one evening. I consented to do so. I entered the pulpit with no unusual inspiration; as I progressed in the discourse the Holy Spirit came upon me and filled me with divine light. There was a gracious manifestation of God's presence in convicting the unsaved. Twelve came with the people of God to the altar for prayer. I was then requested to remain during the week; so I did, and over the Sabbath. The power of the Lord came down upon the people. The altar was crowded every evening, and many were converted. Formal professors and some of the unsaved complained that the preaching was too plain, but still they would come. I left

on the second Saturday to attend my quarterly meeting, not intending to return, as I was to assist in a meeting at another place; but on Monday a brother came from Albion, saying, "You must return to the meeting." I then went back on Monday evening and remained until the next Saturday. Up to that time seventy-five had been converted. On Sabbath a brother came fourteen miles in a sleigh and said to me, "You must return on Sabbath evening." I refused to leave my quarterly meeting until Monday morning. On Monday I went back to Albion and remained with them during that week. One hundred and one united with our Church; the number saved I do not now recall. This was a wonderful victory. A number of railroad men, who were very wicked, attended the services every evening. They would become angry at the preacher, but finally were brought under conviction, yielded, and were saved. J. T. Butler, the pastor, exerted a fine influence in the town, and was a power in the meeting.

#### MAPLE GROVE CHURCH.

A church-house, known as Maple Grove, had been erected, and a society had been organized, mostly of unregenerated people. There was an indebtedness on the house of \$360.00, secured by a mortgage on the farm of one of the trustees. The brother died soon after the mortgage was given. This was likely to disturb the widow. I was offered the house on easy terms. I sent them word if they would let me have the house I would hold revival services in the church, but the purchase of the house should be an after consideration. This was agreed to, and I commenced my meeting. Rev. J. E. Grimes, pastor of the Columbia City charge, assisted me in the meeting. As I was on a district, I must leave the meeting on Saturday and return Monday. I sent for Rev. J. L. Parks, who was then stationed at Ligonier, to conduct the singing.

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The attendance was good. Many of those people had joined another church, but were not the subjects of saving grace. The immediate thought of many of them was the sale of the church. They would inquire of the pastor and singer every day if Thomas was going to buy the house. On a certain evening, when the house was crowded, I said: "About all you fellows think about is selling this church; you are more concerned about that than you are about your souls. I came here not to buy a church, but to persuade you to be saved. What do you think I want with a church-house when I have no society?" The next day they said to Rev. J. L. Parks, "If Thomas will open the doors of the church, we will join."

The following evening the congregation was very large. When I invited them to Christ no one came. I said: "You say if I will open the doors of the Church you will join. As the Lord liveth, I would not have the whole crowd of you, if you would offer yourselves to-night as you are. Jesus said, 'Ye must be born again.' If you ever get into this Church without being converted, you will have to deceive me. If you are not willing to surrender and give your hearts to Christ, joining the church will not save you. Jesus said, 'Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' Again he said, 'He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life, and the wrath of God abideth on him.' I want you to forget the sale of this church, and give yourselves to Christ and be saved. Your coming here joining in the singing and going through the form of worship will not save you. Christ will have the heart in religion." There was a man in the congregation that evening who had not been in the house of worship for many years, and went away without expressing any desire to be saved, but the following evening he returned. The discourse that evening was on the parable of the "Lost Sheep." At the close of the sermon I invited seekers to come and bow at the altar of prayer;

the man alluded to above arose and came down the aisle and spoke to his wife and said, "Go with me to the altar of prayer." They bowed at the altar, and many others followed. I went to this man and asked him what he desired. "I want to be saved," was his reply. "Are you willing to be saved in God's way of saving men?" "Oh," said he, "I am an awful sinner." "Well," said I, "We have a wonderful Savior." "Yes," said he, "you have no idea what a wicked man I am; I have not been in the house of the Lord for seven years. I am one of the worst men in the country." I said: "Thank God that you are here to-night, and not in hell. Lord, let in the light and let this man see himself." "Well," said he, "what must I do?" I said: "You must pray; they that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." He became wonderfully in earnest. He finally arose, and in a moment the light came, and he gave God the glory. His wife also was saved.

The meeting was continued five weeks; and at the expiration of that time I stood in the open doors of the Church. Thirty-five came weeping and praising the Lord for saving grace. I then took steps to free the church of debt; we had letters printed which we sent out to all our people on the charges on the district, asking them to contribute from one to five dollars for this interest. In a short time we received \$300.00. We then appointed a time for the dedication of the house; Bishop J. Weaver officiated. The services were conducted in a grove; many of our ministerial brethren favored us with their presence and help. Rev. J. L. Parks conducted the singing, and the bishop preached grandly. There was a call for \$300.00 which was secured in cash and good subscription, and the house was dedicated to the worship of God. I praise God that he gave those who were engaged in the meeting courage not to yield to the wishes of unsaved men and women. Nothing short of a divine renovation of heart

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will answer in the judgment. As I pen these words I only wish that I had been more true in insisting on a Scriptural Christianity. Shall I meet thousands in the judgment to whom I have preached in the past fifty-six years who were not faithfully warned? I have aimed to be true; the errors of my life are all under the blood, and I hope to lead a few more wandering ones back to God before the Master calls me home. I attended all my quarterly meetings but one, which was acceptably supplied by Prof. D. N. Howe.

The annual conference of 1887 was held at Roanoke, Indiana, J. Dickson presiding. This was unsurpassed by any previous sessions for spirituality and unanimity of feeling. The reports showed progress in various respects. The conference sermon was delivered by Dr. Warner, missionary secretary, from John 3:16, Bishop Dickson not being able to preach. At the close of the sermon Rev. J. L. Parks and Rev. C. A. Thorn were ordained.

At this conference I was appointed to the Peru Circuit. The charge was not new to me, as I had served as their presiding elder a number of times. Having been on a district for several years, I had no horse, and did not see my way clear to purchase one. The appointments being close together save one, I felt sure that I could get through nicely. My finance meeting was well attended; the brethren wished me to state to them the amount I desired. I made them a proposition to preach for so much per member. They admitted that my proposition was reasonable, and accepted it; but when they figured a little and found that they had agreed to pay me \$700.00, some of them said it could never be done. I said, "Brethren, if you will listen, I will help you, and all will come out well." I was blessed with good health, and gave the charge full time; visited and prayed with the people, and preached the best I could by the help of the Holy Spirit. The people soon felt hopeful. I had no need to



purchase a horse, as the brethren were well supplied with horses and buggies and would not allow me to walk to my appointments. As I did not live on the charge, I made my home with Brother Joseph Richer. The members, both old and young, did all they could to help me, and we had a pleasant and profitable year. The charge paid me \$720.00 and \$15.00 in donations. Rev. R. P. Burton, that faithful man of God, was my presiding elder. I was expecting to be returned to this charge, but it was otherwise ordered.

The next annual conference was held at Ligonier, Indiana, 1888, J. Weaver, bishop. The conference was spiritual and harmonious. I was elected presiding elder, and was sent to the Manchester District, which consisted of twelve charges. I made it a point to stay from four to five days with each pastor when required. This was a little wearing, but to me a source of pleasure when I could lead men to the Cross.

Rev. R. P. Burton was on the Peru charge, where I had served the previous year; he remained at this appointment four years. These were years of victory; the church was greatly strengthened, and many precious souls were saved. He was loved by all his people; the men of the world also honored him. There was a large degree of revival influence on nearly every charge. The quarterly meetings on nearly all the charges were well attended, and in the main, spiritual. The salaries of the pastors in the aggregate were better than in the past. Although the church had been greatly disturbed by the Commission Act, we were saved from division and strife. It was true that many of our people were grieved, and a few went away from us, but there was not an unkind word spoken to me by any one. The blessed Master helped me in my work, and I tried to move cautiously and treat all kindly. The ministers were all kind as were the people. It grieved me much to take a position which I knew would disappoint

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some of my best friends; but to be true to what I believed to be right, I must pursue the course I did. For weeks after the Commission carried, I received letters from a number in the Church asking me what I was going to do. An untiring effort was made to induce me to join in with the minority after the action of the General Conference. I answered many of the letters I received, and still they came. I then wrote an article for the *Religious Telescope*, and by request it will be given in this connection.

### A CONSISTENT COURSE.

The following article was published in the *Telescope* of August 14, 1889:

“MR. EDITOR: For the past few weeks I have felt that I should write a few lines expressive of my views and feelings concerning the present situation in our beloved Zion. I am the son of an old pioneer missionary, Rev. Jonathan Thomas. Twenty years of the fifty that he served in the Church were spent in the Black Swamps of Ohio. These were years of severe trial to himself and family. It cost something to be a United Brethren preacher in those days; it meant suffering and self-denial such as ministers, their wives, and children now know but little of. The hours father and mother spent in tears and prayer, asking God’s aid to endure and perform the duties devolving upon them, live in my memory. The children will never forget those years of suffering and privation.

“Mother and half of the ten children have left us. Father at the age of eighty-two, though much afflicted, is still with us. He was a plain, fearless preacher. He opposed sin in all its forms. He was an inveterate enemy of slavery and oath-bound secrecy. Hence the principles of the United Brethren Church as set forth in our Book of Discipline were early instilled in my mind. As I grew to manhood and thought for myself, they were more firmly fixed in my

heart. I was converted at an early period in life, and in my sixteenth year I joined the United Brethren Church. I received license to preach in my nineteenth year, and at the age of twenty-two I joined St. Joseph Conference. My first license was signed by Dr. L. Davis, he being presiding bishop at that time. God bless the good old man. I love him still.

“I am now fifty-eight years old. I have never been without a charge since I joined the conference, but on missions, circuits, stations, and districts I have toiled for the good of the Church and the salvation of lost men. I have always loved the Church of my choice, and have never received a member into the Church in violation of her law. Some who were members of secret orders, who agreed to live in harmony with our Church government, have been received into the Church under my administration. I once thought and said that if the Church ever backed down from her law on secret societies I would sever my connection with her.

“Four years ago, at the General Conference held at Fostoria, Ohio, I voted against the Commission. If I had been a member of the last Conference I should have voted against it, believing, as I did, that there was a better way out of our difficulty. But after the vote had been taken and the work of the Commission carried, I should have kept my seat in the Conference. I should have submitted to the ruling of the majority. In the past four years I have asked my Master so to guide me that I might not be allowed to take one step that would not be wise. I now have the consciousness that my steps have been ordered of the Lord. I desire to so live as not to break the peace of the Church or give offense to any; that when I come to close my eyes in death I may have no cause to regret.

“I am constantly receiving letters from every district in the conference, asking: ‘What are you going to do? What do you advise?’ Just now letters from good men come, asking for counsel. I have never felt my responsibility as

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I have in the past few weeks. I have asked the Master to help me to say such things as would result in the greatest good. My counsel may not have been satisfactory to all.

“Now let me in this public way say to my brethren and sisters who are grieved, especially those of St. Joseph Conference, Do not act hastily. Pray for divine direction. Do not allow self to rule. You may say that unfair steps have been taken. If so, you are not responsible. Every one shall give an account to God for himself. Keep your own heart right. Dear brethren, I advise that you submit. I honestly believe more evil will result from strife and division than from submission. But you say, ‘I cannot submit to that which I conceive to be wrong.’ You need not change your views or cease your opposition to what you believe to be wrong. But you say, ‘I cannot belong to a Church that admits those who belong to secret societies to Church fellowship.’ Say, my good brother, is it not true you have been living under that kind of law the past four years? The Constitution has only been changed so as to harmonize with the law. True, this has grieved you. May it not be, you will suffer more and be grieved more over the results of separation than by quietly submitting to the ruling of the General Conference?

“For myself, I cannot afford to antagonize my brethren and sisters at whose tables I have sat and in whose beds I have slept, whom I have met at the altar of consecration, by whose money my family has been provided for, with whom I have rejoiced, whether radical or liberal. Dear brethren, I would not say one word that would grieve you. I would love to live in peace with you in the Church, and with you be gathered to the beautiful land on high.

“Christian brethren and sisters, in the past thirty-five years many of you have received my counsel, I trust to profit. Won’t you hear me in this? I know it is only by grace that I write thus. I assure you I sacrifice as much of self to thus write and act as you. Let us act wisely. You

may never endorse many things in connection with the work of the Commission, but rather than have our Church divided and ruined, our circuits, stations, and societies divided, won't you submit? We are all brethren. We may not all see alike, but let us accord to others that which we claim for ourselves—honesty of purpose. Oh, how God has blessed us in the few years past! As we have gathered around God's altar and have consecrated all to him, how we were caused to rejoice in the victories of divine grace! How we were made to love each other! Our people were elevated and set forward in their Christian life, and felt that they were all one in Christ Jesus. The world looked on with admiration. Shall we now divide and antagonize each other? God forbid! We had better suffer wrong—a thousand times better—than do wrong. I pray that the dear Master may help you and me to decide and act wisely.

“I am happy to say all is going nicely on my district. We have not had any strife or contention in any quarterly conference this year. The most of those who are grieved have taken counsel and have been kind and orderly. I think we, as pastors and presiding elders, while we are firm, should be kind and judicious. A presiding elder should remember who and what he is. Let us all be wise and noble in spirit. I heard a bishop in this Church say that a large stock of religion and common sense were two excellent things for a preacher to have. Let us all be patient. Some men are slow in taking hold of new things. Our people, in the main, are honest. They only want to know the right.”

The annual conference of 1889 was held in North Manchester, N. Castle presiding bishop. The conference was opened with prayer by the bishop, followed by some very timely and appropriate lessons on “Practical Christianity.” This session of conference will not soon be forgotten; the services were both interesting and spiritual. Sabbath was a memorable day. The love feast at 9:00 A.M. was led by Rev. R. W. Hutchinson, and was a blessed occasion. At

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10:30 Bishop Castle preached an able and soul-cheering sermon from Romans 1:16. The Sabbath-school anniversary was held at 3:00 P.M. This was an occasion of special interest to all present, owing to the presence of W. H. Levering, Lafayette, the State Sabbath-School Secretary. In this service there was given a recital of "The Preacher's Vacation," by Mrs. Enos Thomas, which was most appropriate, and said to have been rendered to perfection. The Roanoke and Manchester choirs furnished excellent music.

At this conference I was elected a presiding elder and appointed to the Lafayette District. The year was one of toil and care, but much good was accomplished for the Church and the Lord.

Our next session of conference was held at Bremen, September 10-14, 1890, Bishop E. B. Kephart presiding. He was at his best, and presided over the conference to the satisfaction of all.

In this place I wish to make mention of Rev. C. C. Purviance, who was a Christian of the highest type. His death occurred March 19, 1890. On Saturday of the conference week, at 3:00 P.M., a memorial service was held, conducted by Rev. J. N. Martin and myself.

At this conference I was again elected presiding elder and appointed to the Manchester District.

At the annual conference held at Elkhart, Ind., September, 1891, J. Dickson, bishop, I was elected presiding elder and appointed to the Warsaw District. Following is an extract from my annual report:

"I am sure the pastors and delegates will not charge me with not doing all in my power to secure all that was due them. I have not been willing that one minister should fail to receive every dollar promised him. At the time of the last quarterly meeting some of the charges were far behind. In company with the circuit steward, I went from house to house, and so continued until all was secured. . .

“A few people think me too plain, but, believing and realizing that God smiles upon me in thus plainly declaring his word, I cling to the old gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. I am soon to stand before God, the Judge of all, with the thousands to whom I have spoken from the sacred desk. I desire that none shall be lost because of my unfaithfulness, but I would have my skirts clear of the blood of all men. Some say the people will not hear the old doctrine of repentance and a godly sorrow for sin, of hell, and future punishment. I have not found it so. God says, ‘Preach the gospel I bade thee.’ Especially to the young men of the conference I would say, ‘Be true to conscience, to the Bible, and to God.’”

“To the ministers and members of the Warsaw District, I truly appreciate all your kindness. If during the years I have spoken harshly, forgive me. I would live in peace with you on earth and dwell with you in the beautiful land on high.”

The annual conference of 1892 was held at North Manchester, Indiana. Owing to the illness of Bishop Weaver, Bishop N. Castle presided. At the close of the opening session, Bishop Weaver “entered the room leaning upon the arm of Rev. R. J. Parrett,” and was seated on the rostrum. On the next day he gave the following address:

“I know how very precious your time may be, and would not detain you. Twenty-seven years ago I visited you for the first time; this is the fourteenth conference that I have been with you.

“Many ministers were here twenty-seven years ago who are not here now, and there are many here now who were not here twenty-seven years ago.”

He then called for all who were at that conference to stand up. Only six veterans of the Cross, with tear-stained faces, stood up with him.

“You see how things are going. Ere long there will not be one left. I am very glad to be here; it is always a soul

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feast for me to be in the St. Joseph Conference. Four years ago we had such a good time, I have not quite gotten over it yet, and I never want to. This has been a year of affliction to me; I was very near the crossing, but it wasn't very dark."

I wish here to give a part of my report to the annual conference: "On my district (Warsaw) I found many good people who give evidence of deep piety and devotion to the Church and the cause of Christ; others are formal and indifferent. I am persuaded that the spirituality of the Church is far below what it was a few years ago. The pulpit, I fear, is in a measure at fault. Because some have become fanatical and technical, we have unwisely lowered the standard. We should get down before the Lord and cry, "Lord, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Every year I am shown more clearly that it is not by might nor by power, nor by worldly wisdom, skill, and human devices and expedients that the kingdom of God is to be built up, but by that power that Jesus said would be given to the disciples if they would tarry at Jerusalem—"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.'"

At this session of conference he was elected presiding elder and appointed to the Warsaw District.

The conference of 1893 was held at Nappanee, Bishop N. Castle presiding. This was a very pleasant session of conference. This being the bishop's home conference, it was a pleasure to have him preside over its sessions. At this conference I was appointed to the Manchester District. The district convention this year was held at Columbia City, June 7. The attendance was large and the convention good.

During this year a neat and commodious house of worship was erected at Laketon, under the pastorate of Rev. G. L. Mattox. This was a beautiful brick building, with a seating capacity of about four hundred, costing five thou-



sand dollars. The dedicatory services were conducted by Bishop Castle.

At Warsaw, Ind., the annual conference of 1894 was held. Bishop Weaver was present and presided over the conference. His sermon on Sabbath was very helpful and inspiring. His text was Luke 24:50. The Presbyterian church was crowded to its utmost capacity. The vast audience seemed entranced by the bishop's eloquence. At the close of the morning service, A. T. Howard, G. V. Wyland, and J. E. Grimes were ordained. In the evening Prof. T. J. Sanders, president of Otterbein University, delivered a very thoughtful and suggestive discourse on "Building According to God's Plan." At this conference I was appointed to the Berrien District.

Having written the number of pages I proposed in the beginning, it is necessary that I give but a brief sketch of the remaining sixteen years of my itinerant life. In 1895 the conference was held at Plymouth, Ind., Bishop Mills presiding. The attendance was large and the sessions were quite spiritual. At this conference I was elected presiding elder and appointed to the Berrien District. The year was one of toil, but good results were secured. My salary this year was \$812.25. During this year our church-house at Walnut Creek burned, but there was an insurance of \$1,150, and steps were soon taken to rebuild.

The conference of 1896 was held at La Grange, Ind., Bishop Kephart presiding. At this conference I was appointed to the Warsaw District, where I spent the year in hard toil, but withal pleasantly; I was treated kindly by all. Many souls were saved on the district.

In 1897 the conference was held at Frankfort, Ind. Bishop Weaver being in feeble health, Dr. W. M. Bell, Missionary Secretary, was called to the chair and presided over the conference. At this session I was again appointed to the Warsaw District, which I had previously served a number of years. This was a year of toil and care, but

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attended with success. Professor J. W. Bonnell and D. B. Kessinger were converted and licensed to preach during the year, and they are both now in the active ministry.

The conference of 1898 was held at South Whitley, Ind., Bishop Castle presiding. The attendance was large, the sessions full of interest, and the reports of pastors showed that there had been many gracious revivals during the year. At this conference my district presented to me a beautiful gold watch, which was highly appreciated. Bishop Castle being in feeble health, Dr. W. M. Bell delivered the conference sermon. At this conference I was appointed to the North Manchester District. During this year I had some strange experiences. It was the duty of presiding elders to raise on their district two hundred dollars for the mission debt. The best plan to be pursued was a subject of interest, and called forth some discussion. After spending a restless night, thinking and planning, I decided to adopt the following plan: To ask the women on the district to raise the money by each one setting a hen and giving the market price for all the chickens thus raised. The plan was somewhat novel, but the women responded nobly. One woman, instead of setting a hen, gave a good sheep, which she sold for four dollars. The proceeds from the sale of chickens and the one sheep amounted to three hundred dollars. A large number of women attended the conference to hear their presiding elder's report on chickens.

In 1899 the conference convened at Bourbon, Ind., Bishop Weaver presiding. Peace and harmony prevailed throughout the entire conference. On Sabbath morning the bishop, though weak in body, delivered one of his best sermons, which was considered one of the happiest efforts of his life. At this conference I was again appointed to the North Manchester District.

The conference of 1900 was held at Columbia City, Ind., Bishop Castle presiding. The sessions were held in the Baptist church. The conference sermon by Bishop Castle.

delivered with much tenderness, was one of beauty, power, and eloquence. Text, I. Tim. 4: 12, "Be thou an example of the believers in faith." At this conference I was appointed to the Lafayette District.

In 1901 the conference was held at Warsaw, Ind., Bishop E. B. Kephart presiding. This conference was one of special interest, owing to the fact that by the action of the General Conference of 1901 a part of the Auglaize and North Ohio conferences were united to the St. Joseph Conference.

ADDED TERRITORY FROM NORTH OHIO AND AUGLAIZE  
CONFERENCES.

At the General Conference held in Frederick City, Maryland, May, 1901, the North Ohio and Auglaize conferences were dissolved. This was done, not because they could not sustain themselves, but with the view of making the State lines the outside boundary lines, and forming conferences wholly within given States. Accordingly that portion of the North Ohio in the State of Michigan was attached to the Michigan Conference; that part in Ohio was attached to the Sandusky Conference, and the charges in the State of Indiana were attached to the St. Joseph Conference. Following are the names of the charges: Angola, Waterloo, Pleasant Lake, Hamilton, Butler, Churubusco, and Newville. With these charges there came thirteen ministers—J. C. Albright, W. C. Butler, J. H. Crouse, C. M. Everetts, S. O. Fink, W. S. Gandy, E. J. Hall, S. P. Klotz, A. F. McCloe, J. T. Ransburg, I. N. Shilling, B. F. Thomas, and S. H. Yager. The aggregate membership was 1,786.

Four conferences shared in the division of the Auglaize Conference; namely, Sandusky, seventeen charges; Miami, four charges; White River, six charges, and St. Joseph five charges, as follows: Ft. Wayne, Decatur, Monroeville, Ossian, and Tocsin. With these charges came also their

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respective pastors, J. W. Lake, J. Q. Kline, J. A. Circle, J. A. Kek, and G. H. Hutchinson; also J. W. Lower, the presiding elder of the Ft. Wayne District at the time of the division. Beside these there were three supernumerary ministers, D. W. Abbott, H. C. Smith, and D. J. Schenck, father of Ella Schenck, one of the martyred missionaries in Africa in 1898. Members received from Auglaize Conference, 1,271.

That portion of the St. Joseph Conference in Michigan was ceded to the Michigan Conference; four charges, Berrien Springs, Marcellus, Buchanan, and Sodus. This was a source of grief to some of the members in Michigan. Especially was this true of Cornelius Howard, one of the lay delegates to the General Conference of 1901.

At this conference I was again elected presiding elder and appointed to the Peru District. The year was a successful one, with many good revivals.

The conference of 1902 was held at Peru, Bishop Kephart presiding. The sessions were quite spiritual, and the bishop's sermon on Sabbath was excellent. At this conference I was again appointed to the Peru District. The year was a very pleasant one.

In 1903 the St. Joseph Conference held its fifty-ninth annual session at Warsaw, Ind., Bishop Kephart presiding. At this conference I returned to the pastoral work, and was appointed to the North Manchester station, my home charge, where I had served as pastor in 1868, and where I had served as presiding elder many years. I was appointed to this charge at the request of the church there, and was never treated more kindly.

After the death of Rev. R. P. Burton, presiding elder of the Warsaw District, early in the conference year, Rev. J. A. Cummins was appointed by Bishop Kephart presiding elder of the Warsaw District, entering upon his work January 1, 1904.

The conference of 1904 was held at Plymouth, Ind., Bishop Kephart presiding. At this conference I was appointed to the Warsaw District, where I spent a very pleasant year.

At the annual conference of 1905, held at Huntington, Ind., Bishop G. M. Mathews presiding, I submitted my last report as presiding elder, and voluntarily retired from the regular work of the ministry. During the first winter after retiring, I entered the evangelistic work, and for eighteen weeks averaged one sermon a day.

During this year our beloved Bishop Kephart was called from labor to reward, his death occurring at Indianapolis, Ind., January 23, 1906. He was held in high esteem in the St. Joseph Conference, and throughout our beloved Zion as well.

September, 1906, the annual conference was held in the North Manchester church, Bishop Mathews presiding. It was indeed a pleasure for me to attend another annual conference in my own church, where I had served as pastor and presiding elder a number of years, and where I held my membership in the Church. Having no appointment from the conference, it was my privilege to work on different fields as opportunity would serve. Indeed, I found more work than I could do. My brethren in the ministry and laity have treated me kindly.

On February 22, 1907, Bishop J. Dickson, who so often had presided over our conference, and for the last time at Elkhart in 1891, died at his home in Chambersburg, Pa., in the eighty-seventh year of his age.

The next session of our conference will be held at Fulton, Fulton County, Indiana, September 11, 1907. Through the years of my ministry in the St. Joseph Conference it has been my privilege to mark the growth of the conference and the advancement on various lines of work. The Church has reached a brighter day, for which we should all "thank God and take courage."

## CHAPTER XVII

### CONCLUSION.

Sixty-six years ago, at the age of nine years, I gave my heart to Christ and he accepted me. After a time I wandered away from him, but in my sixteenth year I was reclaimed and joined the United Brethren Church. At the age of nineteen I was licensed to preach, and spent three years in evangelistic work during the winter months. I was received into the St. Joseph annual conference in 1853, at the age of twenty-two, and walked one hundred miles to my first charge; had a glorious year. During this year I was married, as the record states. For fifty-two years I was not without a charge, either a circuit, station, mission, or district. I was elected to the office of presiding elder thirty-seven times. One year I asked to be released from so much care, and was appointed to the Bourbon charge. During that year, in a great revival, one hundred and eighty-five were converted. I have been a member of four General Conferences; have never disappointed a congregation unless unavoidably detained, and have never asked a charge for a vacation of even a single week in fifty-two years. Every position in the Church that I have held was without solicitation on my part. I have been favored more than I have deserved. I have worked on small salaries the most of the time; have moved on wagons through the mud, over corduroy bridges; lived in old cabin houses which had been abandoned, but the Lord helped me to endure all. Those were years of toil for me and trial for my wife and children. Though of delicate constitution, my wife never

flinched, until failing health rendered it necessary that we secure a more permanent location.

During the years of my ministry I have seen thousands converted, many of whom have gone to their heavenly home. God gave me strong lungs and excellent vocal powers, and, above all, a burning zeal for the salvation of men. I was born in a revival, my father being a missionary in a new country where ministers preached a whole gospel and did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God; hence great revivals followed their preaching. In this way I imbibed a revival spirit. If I were again young, as I now see it, I would give my life entirely to saving souls. I would rather be a soul-winner than to hold any position in the gift of the Church. I have not said these things to exalt myself; I deeply regret my unfaithfulness. I wish I had been better, more devoted than I have been.

As I have presided over so many young men, I have greatly felt my responsibility. To-day I thank my Heavenly Father for his grace that has kept me from bringing a reproach upon the Church and the cause of Christ. I have outlived all my father's family save two—a brother in the ministry, aged eighty-one, and a sister at the age of seventy. All the presiding elders who presided over me, save two, have gone to their reward. Those living are Bishop N. Castle and Rev. J. A. Cummins. Now, in my seventy-seventh year, I preach from one to two sermons almost every Sabbath. I love to preach the blessed gospel of Christ.

And now I ask to be remembered by all good people who read this imperfect sketch, when they talk to the Lord in prayer, that I may be sustained by his grace. I hope not to live to become a burden to my conference, and yet I desire to live as long as I can be useful. Farewell till we meet in Father's house.

## ST. JOSEPH CONFERENCE HISTORICAL CHART.

No.	DATE.	WHERE HELD.	BISHOP.	SECRETARIES.	No. of Ministers.	No. of Members.	No. of Charges.	No. of Dists.
1	Sept. 18, 1845.	No. Manchester, Ind..	F. Whitcomb, Ch'm'n, as't'd by W. Davis.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
2	Oct. 12, 1846.	Lefell's Church (near Warsaw)	J. J. Gossbrenner	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
3	Oct. 7, 1847..	Berrien Springs, Michigan	W. Hanby .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
4	Sept. 28, 1848.	Jefferson, Ind. ....	W. Hanby .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
5	1849.....	Not given .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
6	Sept. 5, 1850..	Dayton, Ind. ....	D. Edwards .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
7	Sept. 5, 1851..	North Manchester	D. Edwards .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
8	Sept. 4, 1852..	Pike Creek, Ind. ....	D. Edwards .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
9	Sept. 1, 1853..	Pleasant Plain .....	L. Davis .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
10	—, 1854.....	Lake Chapel (near Rochester) .....	L. Davis .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
11	Aug. 29, 1855.	North Manchester .....	J. J. Gossbrenner	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
12	Aug. 22, 1856.	Deer Creek .....	D. Edwards .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
13	Sept. 15, 1857.	Berrien Springs, Michigan	L. Davis .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
14	Sept. 23, 1858.	Roanoke, Ind. ....	L. Davis .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
15	Oct. 6, 1859...	Laketon, Ind. ....	L. Davis .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
16	Sept. 14, 1860.	Livengood's (near Elkhart) .....	J. Lawrence, <i>pro tem</i> .....	F. L. Forbs	.....	.....	.....	.....
17	Oct. 10, 1861.	Seven Mile .....	J. Markwood .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
18	Oct. 9, 1862..	Indian Village .....	J. Markwood .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
19	Oct. 16, 1863.	Lafayette .....	J. Markwood .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
20	Sept. 16, 1864.	Simon's Church .....	J. Markwood .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
21	Oct. 4, 1865.	Galveston .....	J. Weaver .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
22	Sept. 19, 1866.	Bourbon .....	J. Weaver .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
23	Sept. 18, 1867.	Silver Lake .....	J. Weaver .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
24	Oct. 7, 1868..	Buchanan, Mich. ....	J. Weaver .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
25	Sept. 23, 1869.	Roanoke .....	D. Edwards .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
26	1870.....	Buchanan, Mich. (?)	J. Weaver (?)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
27	1871.....	Solomon's Creek (?)	J. Weaver (?)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
28	1872.....	North Manchester .....	D. Edwards .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
29	Oct. 2, 1873..	Galveston .....	J. W. Hott, <i>pro tem</i>	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....



# ST. JOSEPH CONFERENCE HISTORICAL CHART.—Continued.

No.	DATE.	WHERE HELD.	BISHOP.	SECRETARIES.			No. of Ministers.	No. of Members.	No. of Churches.	No. Diots.
30	Sept. 23, 1874.	Roanoke	J. Dickson	E. F. Light, H. A. Snepp.	86	6,388	36	3		
31	Aug. 25, 1875.	Bourbon	J. Dickson	E. F. Light, H. A. Snepp.	79	6,671	36	3		
32	Aug. 30, 1876.	Ligonier	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, H. A. Snepp.	84	6,598	36	3		
33	Aug. 22, 1877.	Dayton, Ind.	J. Weaver	E. F. Light.	83	7,045	37	3		
34	Aug. 28, 1878.	North Manchester	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, J. D. Coverstone.	81	6,863	42	4		
35	Sept. 3, 1879.	Bertles Springs	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, H. A. Snepp.	67	6,780	42	4		
36	Aug. 25, 1880.	Bremen	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, H. A. Snepp.	80	6,739	45	4		
37	Aug. 24, 1881.	North Village	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, C. W. Pattee.	92	7,011	45	4		
38	Aug. 23, 1882.	North Manchester	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, C. W. Pattee.	82	7,434	47	4		
39	Aug. 22, 1883.	Lafayette	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, C. W. Pattee.	92	7,011	45	4		
40	Aug. 20, 1884.	Centenary, Ind.	E. B. Kephart	E. F. Light, C. W. Pattee.	82	7,434	47	4		
41	Aug. 26, 1885.	Packerton	E. B. Kephart	E. F. Light, C. W. Pattee.	92	7,834	43	4		
42	Aug. 26, 1886.	Bourbon	N. Castle	E. F. Light, C. W. Pattee.	66	8,063	46	4		
43	Sept. 7, 1887.	Roanoke	J. Dickson	E. F. Light, C. W. Pattee.	82	8,318	46	4		
44	Aug. 29, 1888.	Ligonier	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, C. W. Pattee.	84	8,784	47	4		
45	Aug. 1, 1889.	North Manchester	N. Castle	E. F. Light, E. G. Knoffs.	82	8,318	46	4		
46	Sept. 1, 1889.	Bremen	E. B. Kephart	E. F. Light, J. L. Parks.	81	8,889	48	4		
47	Sept. 10, 1890.	Elkhart	J. Dickson	E. F. Light, J. L. Parks.	89	9,434	46	4		
48	Sept. 9, 1891.	North Manchester	J. Weaver	E. F. Light, J. L. Parks.	82	10,535	48	4		
49	Sept. 7, 1892.	Nappanee	N. Castle	J. L. Parks, A. M. Cummins.	89	8,988	48	4		
50	Sept. 6, 1893.	Warsaw	J. Weaver	J. L. Parks, A. M. Cummins.	93	10,459	49	4		
51	Sept. 12, 1894.	Plymouth	J. S. Mills	J. L. Parks, A. M. Cummins.	95	10,582	46	4		
52	Sept. 4, 1895.	Warsaw	J. S. Mills	J. L. Parks, A. M. Cummins.	101	11,429	55	4		
53	Sept. 2, 1896.	LaGrange	E. B. Kephart	J. L. Parks, A. M. Cummins.	101	11,078	57	4		
54	Sept. 8, 1897.	Frankfort	J. Weaver	J. A. Eby, J. D. Coverstone.	102	11,478	55	4		
55	Sept. 14, 1898.	S. Whitley	N. Castle	J. A. Eby, J. D. Coverstone.	102	10,384	52	4		
56	Sept. 13, 1899.	Bourbon	J. Weaver	J. A. Eby, J. D. Coverstone.	101	10,156	52	4		
57	Sept. 12, 1900.	Columbia City	N. Castle	J. A. Eby, J. D. Coverstone.	101	10,083	55	4		
58	Sept. 18, 1901.	Warsaw	E. B. Kephart	J. W. DeLong, J. W. Lower.	125	12,365	68	4		
59	Sept. 17, 1902.	Peru	E. B. Kephart	J. W. DeLong, J. W. Lower.	113	12,377	59	4		
60	Sept. 16, 1903.	Warsaw	E. B. Kephart	J. W. DeLong, J. W. Lower.	111	12,450	61	4		
61	Sept. 14, 1904.	Plymouth	E. B. Kephart	J. W. DeLong, J. W. Lower.	105	12,611	59	4		
62	Sept. 20, 1905.	Huntington	G. M. Mathews.	J. W. DeLong, J. W. Lower.	111	12,953	61	4		
63	Sept. 12, 1906.	North Manchester	G. M. Mathews.	J. W. DeLong, J. W. Lower.	114	13,635	62	2		
64	Sept. 11, 1907.	Fulton	G. M. Mathews.	J. W. DeLong, J. W. Lower.	114	13,635	62	2		

## CHAPTER XVIII

### REMINISCENCES.

Many novel things are likely to come to the notice of ministers; especially was this true in the days of the pioneer ministers of the United Brethren Church. In my boyhood days many of them called at my father's home; among them were Bishop Kumler, H. G. Spayth, Father Bowsher, and others. They were godly men, but often a little eccentric, having opinions and customs which to us would seem extreme.

In those days, in the country where my father lived, it was not considered in good taste for gentlemen and ladies to be seated promiscuously in time of service. At a camp-meeting, conducted by Bishop Kumler, H. G. Spayth, and J. Thomas (my father), a strange young man attended the meeting. His conduct was not in keeping with the rules of the meeting. He wore a silk hat, which was an unusual thing in that new country, and during the services he would be seated with the ladies, refusing to remove his hat. This being considered out of order, the ladies kindly called his attention to it, and requested him to be seated among the gentlemen. He refused to do so, and finally some of the ministers told him to observe the rules of the camp-ground, saying that the ladies had complained of his conduct. He replied insolently: "You attend to your business; this is a free country; I will sit *where* I please. I paid for my hat, and will wear it *when* I please."

Rev. J. Thomas, who was noted for his skill in managing unruly men, said to Bishop Kumler and others,

“Brethren, will you give that young man over into my hands?” “Certainly; if you can make anything out of him you will have done more than we have been able to do,” “I think,” he said, “I know what is wrong with the young fellow; I have a remedy. One prescription will be all that will be needed.” So Mr. Thomas called on the young man and held a private conversation with him. He told him that his course was grievous to the brethren who had charge of the meeting and offensive to the ladies, and asked him to take his place among the gentlemen, and remove his hat in time of service. As before, he replied, “You will do well to attend to your own business.” The minister being a strong man, a little of the Jackson type, said, “Young man, if you appear again in the congregation among the ladies, I will make you feel worse than you have ever felt since you came from your cradle.” “All right, you will find me right there; I will risk anything you may say.” Rev. J. Thomas was to preach at 3 P. M. When the congregation was gathered the young man, as usual, was seated among the ladies, wearing his silk hat. The minister opened the service with prayer, after which he said with a loud, clear voice: “It is a common saying among the old ladies, and I am now convinced that it is correct, if a child is weaned in the wrong sign, it will have a tendency to nurse. I have noticed during the meetings that that young man sitting there with his silk hat on has been *unfortunately weaned in the wrong sign*. If his wants could be supplied, he would be perfectly satisfied, and would keep his place.” The young man was soon out of that place, and it was some minutes before the minister could proceed with his sermon, and frequently he would be interrupted by laughter.

The young man threatened to whip the minister as soon as he would come out of the pulpit. After the services had closed he met the minister, and said to him, “You have grossly insulted me.” “Oh, I reckon not,” said the minister,

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“you do not care for anything I can say.” “Well,” said he, “I have determined to whip you unless you make an apology.” The minister took out his watch and said: “I will give you just three minutes to get off of these grounds; if you do not, I will make it a memorable spot for you. Mark what I say.” He was soon out of sight, and did not return.

### FIFTEEN MINUTES FOR DINNER AT LAFAYETTE.

In 1857 a number of us were on our way to conference; when we arrived at Lafayette, Indiana, the train halted fifteen minutes for dinner. We were no sooner seated at a well-furnished table, paying fifty cents in advance for our dinners, than the car-bell began to ring; the passengers at once left for the train without eating their dinners. I was in no hurry to leave without getting the worth of my money. Placing two pies together, and taking a large stuffed chicken by the legs, I left for the train. The waiter smiled, but offered no protest. As I entered the car with my eatables it created considerable mirth. Some of the ladies said, “Why did not we take something, too?” I said, “Why did you leave the table? the train would not leave until the time for leaving had arrived.” We placed two seats together, spreading some newspapers over them, thus forming an improvised table. A gentleman having a large pocket-knife, carved the chicken and the pies, and the dinner was ready. When the conductor was passing, I said, “This looks a little lawless.” He said, “Do not soil the car.” and went on. I invited the ladies, and those having paid for their dinners to dine with me; they did so. In traveling it is well to understand the ruses of the public, and not be cheated out of that which justly belongs to us.

### THE DEVIL BEATEN BY AN OLD PIONEER MISSIONARY.

Rev. Jonathan Thomas, the pioneer missionary, then a presiding elder, held a quarterly meeting where a union

meeting was in progress. There was quite a good interest in the meeting, yet many of the Christian people paid more attention to their lodges than to the revival meeting. The elder in his sermon on Sabbath, in the presence of a number of ministers, took occasion in his eccentric manner to attack this evil. In his closing remarks he referred to the "woman's organizations," saying that he thought they meant well. "But," he said, "I have raised several daughters, and have found it necessary to be with them occasionally when away from home." While the sermon was being delivered there were many amens heard, but when he rebuked and exposed their want of devotion to the cause of Christ, giving preference to the things of the world, many became offended and said: "The revival is killed; not a minister will fill the pulpit this evening—the meeting will be a failure." One sister said that she enjoyed the sermon so much until the preacher referred to the lodge, then she felt as though a pail of cold water had been poured over her. Some of the ministers said: "Elder, the latter part of your sermon this forenoon has offended some of the best Christian people; the meeting is killed, and if there is any preaching to-night you will have to do it."

This old hero of many revivals, in the face of this opposition, said: "I will gladly fill the pulpit this evening; if rebuking sin will stop this meeting, it ought to be stopped." The audience was large at the evening service; all the ministers were present, expecting defeat. Rev. J. Thomas opened the service with prayer, and the power attending the prayer will never be forgotten by those present. After announcing the text, the minister said: "I desire that every Christian pray to-night; the battle is on, the God of battles is in command, and victory is sure. One sister said this morning, 'When my idol was attacked, I felt as if a bucket of cold water had been poured over me'; now, if you will pray, I will give you something warm to-night."

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The preacher had not proceeded far until many devout persons began to rejoice; "glory to God" was heard from many Spirit-filled Christians. As the minister left the pulpit and walked down the aisle, a miraculous light entered the house, surpassing the light of the lamps; sinners were so moved that they cried for mercy, and a wonderful revival was the result. God always honors faithful preaching.

A skeptical doctor, thinking himself able to place Rev. J. Thomas in an embarrassing position, visited a number of the ladies, prominent in the church and members of an order, and suggested to them that they send an invitation to Elder Thomas, inviting him to meet with them in their lodge, and see that all was moving along properly. The ladies, thinking it would be a fine joke, did so; the doctor was to convey the message to the preacher. When the doctor read the message, Elder Thomas said: "I have always thought that those women who are in the habit of meeting in places where their husbands were not allowed to go had some favorite gentleman whom they invited to meet with them, but did not know it to be so until now. 'Doc,' I have preached in uncivilized communities, but have never been so grossly insulted before. You tell those eight women, whose names are to that note, that they will have to apply to some other gentleman. I am a minister and must lead a pure life." The doctor saw that he had attacked the wrong man, and said, "Elder, those are nice ladies; they only designed it as a joke." The elder knit his eye-brows and insisted that he had never been so grossly insulted. When this came to the notice of the ladies who sent the message, they were very much embarrassed and mortified, and sent for the elder. They tried to assure him that it was designed only as an innocent joke, and that they had been led into it by this wicked doctor; but the elder insisted that he had never been so insulted before. The ladies wept, asked his pardon, and

begged him to give them the message; but he refused, saying: "Ladies, I do not think that you meant anything indecent or unbecoming, but you unwisely allowed yourselves to do an improper thing, to slur one of God's ministers. I hope you have learned a profitable lesson, and one that you will never forget." The doctor, ever afterward, was very unpopular among those ladies.

A MAN ATTEMPTING TO TAKE HIS DAUGHTER FROM THE ALTAR.

Rev. J. Surran and Rev. S. Plummer were noted for their success in revival work. At one of their revival meetings a young lady came to the altar. This so enraged her father that he said if she went again to the altar he would take her away. He was a large, strong man, but when his boy of fourteen summers heard his father's threat, he said: "Dad, you had better not undertake it; those preachers are stout men, and they will throw you out of the house." On the following evening the house was crowded, and many standing around the door who could not get in. The young lady came to the altar again; her father, with his coat off, came rushing in, and, going up to the altar, intended to take his daughter away, when he was met by Rev. S. Plummer, who said, "My friend, what is wrong?" He stopped and aimed a blow at the preacher's face, but the preacher warded off the blow, seized the man, and threw him out into the yard. His boy, who had warned him, cried out, "There, daddy, I told you those preachers would throw you out." The man rushed in the second time and was met by Elder Surran, who said, "My friend, what is the matter?" He manifested considerable defiance, but did not venture to strike him. The elder said, "Stand here and see that your daughter is treated nicely." And so he did. He afterward said that he never knew that preachers were made of that kind of metal, and declared that he had learned

an interesting lesson; that is, that the days of miracles were not passed.

### TOO LATE.

In 1865, in the town of M——, a merchant with whom I had dealt for three years, and for whom I had great respect as a business man, never went to church except on funeral and other special occasions. Consumption having claimed him as its victim, I felt that I should speak to him concerning the interest of his soul. One beautiful summer day I drove to his home, and said to him: "Mr. S——, would you like to ride out this afternoon; it might be helpful to you?" He cheerfully accepted the invitation. As we were conversing on different subjects, I introduced the subject of religion, and urged it as a personal interest. He replied, "Mr. Thomas, I have never given that subject any thought." I said, "Do you not think it a subject worthy of your consideration?" I at once saw that he did not wish to talk on that theme; so I dismissed the subject. A few weeks later, being confined to his room, I called on him, but saw from the attitude of his family that they did not wish me to introduce the subject of Christianity; but I felt that I would not be justified if I did not cause him to feel his condition. I said: "Neighbor, you are quite poorly to-day; how is it with you religiously? Are you ready should you be called away?" To my surprise, he said: "I have never given that subject any thought." I then told him that it was a subject upon which he ought to think; that ever other subject was of minor importance compared with this. So far as I could see I failed to bring him to realize his danger. In two weeks I visited him again, within a few hours of his death. His mind was clear, but not exercised relative to the interest of his soul. Every effort was made to prevent me from having any conversation with him about his soul's welfare, but finally he said, "Mr. Thomas, if you wish to say anything to me, feel free



to do so." I said: "I have come again in the interest of your soul; you are near the close of life, and there is no time to waste. The question that I wish to ask and press upon you is, 'Are you prepared to meet God?' as you surely must meet him very soon face to face." He made me this reply: "Mr. Thomas, I have always led a moral life; I have not been profane. I have been fair in my dealings, and have tried to be kind." I said: "Hold, brother, your life is hanging in a balance; everything pertaining to your eternal interest is at stake. Listen to the apostle Paul, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Mark, he does not say, 'If we break the Sabbath, if we profane the name of the Lord, if we defraud our neighbors,' but if we neglect to accept salvation. The Jews would not accept Christ, and were destroyed. Have you accepted Christ as your Savior?" The tears began to run down over his cheeks; his lips trembled, and he uttered these words, "It is too late." I urged him to confess his sin of having neglected Christ and accept him now. He replied again that it was too late. I tried earnestly to help him to the Cross, but the last words I ever heard him say were, "It is too late." I fear he went into eternity unsaved.

A SINNER'S LAST PRAYER.

At a quarterly meeting on the Colburn charge, some years ago, a messenger came to me with a request that I call to see a dying lady. I at once, in company with Rev. Josiah Simons, went to the home of the dying lady, whom I had never before met. As I entered her room I heard her say in a low whisper, "Jesus, save me." From her groans it was evident that she was suffering intense pain, but at almost every breath I could hear her say, "Jesus, save me." It was certain that she had but a few moments to live, and what was done for her must be done quickly. I said to her, "Are you saved?" As the tears started from her eyes she answered, "No." I then asked her if she desired to be

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saved, and if she believed that Jesus died on the cross to save sinners. "I do," was her reply." "Do you believe he is able and willing to save you now?" She said, "I do." I then asked Brother Simons to sing, "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." During the singing I directed her attention to the cross; occasionally a smile would play over her face, and then despair would follow. It was an awful moment; her eyes were growing glassy in death. I again said, "Accept of Christ now." Her faith said, "He saves," and in a moment heaven beamed in her countenance, and she said, "Glory! Jesus saves me." In three minutes she was in eternity. As I left that humble home, great peace came to my mind; I blessed God that we, his poor, unworthy servants, had been enabled to point a dying sinner to the Cross.

### AN AGED WIDOW'S PRAYER.

In 1849, there resided an aged Christian lady in a very wicked community in the southern part of the St. Joseph Conference. There being no preaching in that place, this Christian woman made a covenant that she would pray night and morning in her home that a revival of religion might be promoted, and that her neighbors might be saved. Many were amused at the thought of the old lady's revival, but she kept on praying that the Lord would send a minister. Finally Rev. Jonathan Thomas, who had spent twenty years as a missionary, had heard of this destitute community, and felt moved to visit it and labor for the salvation of the people. Yielding to his convictions, he at once went to that place and commenced a revival meeting. It very soon became apparent to the minister that certain obstructions must be removed or nothing could be accomplished. There lived in that neighborhood an influential man who was not a friend to the cause of Christ, and as he was a ruling spirit in the community, he was highly respected. It was soon learned that his influence

in some way must be overcome. On one occasion the preacher in the opening prayer said, "Lord, there is a man by the name of Shaffer attending these meetings, whose influence must be overcome or nothing can be done," and prayed that he might be convicted and saved. At this the man became angry, and made some hard threats. The next evening the minister in his prayer said: "Lord, nothing can be done unless Squire Shaffer is gotten out of the way; if he can be saved, save him; if not, remove him out of the way by some means."

He became wonderfully enraged, and provided himself with a club, saying if that prayer would be repeated he would make it a sorrowful prayer for the preacher. The next evening he went to church with his club. The preacher in his prayer said: "Lord, Shaffer is here again, full of the devil, with a club in hand, threatening thy servant. Oh, mighty God, save this man if he can be saved; but if not, take him out of the way of the salvation of this people." The fearless spirit of the preacher and his earnest appeals so confused Mr. Shaffer that he went home under an awful apprehension of his condition. The next morning (it being in the spring of the year) he hitched his horses to a sled, and went out to gather sugar-water; he was driving with a single line, and put the line on the wrong horse, and of course could not manage his team. He came and said to his wife, "The devil has possession of those horses; nothing can be done with them." But his boy, observing the difficulty, said, "Father, you have the line on the wrong horse." Mr. Shaffer said to his boy, "Put the team in the barn." His wife said to him: "Your trouble is that you are convicted of sin; you and I have lived for self and the world, and it is time that we repent or judgment will come upon us. We will kneel down here together and give ourselves to the Lord. I will pray, and then you ask Christ for pardon." They knelt and continued to pray until the Holy Spirit

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said, "Thy sins are all forgiven." That night they went to the services filled with love, and the club was left at home. When the minister arose to announce his hymn, Mr. Shaffer arose and asked the privilege to speak, and told the story of the conversion of himself and wife. No other preaching was needed that evening; sinners cried for mercy and a wonderful revival followed. A society was organized. The squire lived many years to bless the Church and honor Christ. Possibly there was no man whom he held in higher esteem than the man who had prayed that he might be taken out of the way of a revival of religion. Thus the prayer of the aged widow was answered.

### HEAPING COALS OF FIRE ON A DRUNKARD'S HEAD.

In the State of Ohio there lived many years ago an old pioneer minister by the name of Troxel, having a neighbor who was in the habit of becoming intoxicated. On a certain occasion Mr. Troxel met his neighbor, who abused him shamefully. His first thought was that he would have him arrested, but remembering that his family was in destitute circumstances, he decided that he would heap coals of fire on his head. Accordingly he prepared such things as he thought his neighbor's family needed, and sent them over to them. When the man came home in the evening, he demanded that his wife prepare him supper, and then was seated by the fire to sleep. When his supper was prepared, his wife awakened him and invited him to eat. As he looked upon the table spread with all that he could desire, and knowing that he left nothing in the morning for his family, he said, "Wife, where did you get all these things?" Not knowing what he had done, she said, "Father Troxel sent them over." He, with astonishment, said, "Father Troxel!" and he began to weep, and his wife asked him what was wrong. He said, "I have beaten and shamefully abused that man." Then his wife urged him to eat his supper, but he said, "No, I will never eat until I see Father

Troxel." It was two miles through the woods to his home, and now dark. When he rapped at the door, Father Troxel bade him come in and be seated. He said: "Father Troxel, I don't wish to be seated; I came to beg your pardon." The old man said: "Beg my pardon! I have nothing against you; ask the Lord to forgive you." He began to weep, and said, "Father Troxel, will you pray for me?" He replied, "Certainly," and they knelt in prayer, and before that prayer-meeting was ended that man was saved.

#### A CHURCH REPRIMANDED.

On a charge where I was pastor there resided a woman who was somewhat spasmodic in her religious life, seldom attending church except during special revival services, and not then until there was a deep interest awakened. She never failed to have a joyful time when she went. During one of the years of my pastorate I was conducting revival services in a certain church. After we had labored and prayed for three weeks, this lady heard that quite an interest was created, and she came to one of the day services and the Lord poured out his Spirit that day upon the church and many rejoiced.

The lady referred to arose and spoke of the time when she was converted in an old log schoolhouse in the State of Ohio, and how she was made to shout, and spoke of the many shouts she had had along the way since that time, and hoped to die shouting and by a band of angels be carried home, and when she approached the heavenly city, the golden gates would open for her. She hoped to meet Jesus and hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of thy Lord." She hoped to be introduced to the angels and to meet loved ones gone before, and join them in singing the songs of redemption. With a crown of glory on her head and with white raiments, and a palm of victory in her hand, she hoped to walk by the river of life and shout through the ceaseless ages of eternity.

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She then reprimanded the church-members, who had been so faithful, for their coldness, and wondered why they were not on the mountain-top praising God. She then went into a glee of ecstasy and had a grand time. I had to pray for additional grace to endure it. God's faithful ones have a right to shout his praise. The piety of Jesus consisted in three things: 1. He feared. 2. He loved. 3. He obeyed.

### A MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE—CAROLINE GORDON.

Caroline Gordon was an intelligent lady and of an amiable disposition, but was not blessed with religious environments in her early life, her parents and brothers not being Christians. At a revival meeting held by my father, she, with many others, was deeply convicted of sin; so deep was her conviction that she fell down at the altar and cried, "Jesus, save or I perish." On the third or fourth evening she was happily saved, and lay for some time in what was called a trance. Her eyes were set, and the joints of her fingers were stiff. Some were alarmed and feared that she would never return to consciousness; and she did not for several hours. After returning to consciousness she shouted for an hour; some said she was under "mesmeric influence." At almost every prayer service she would be so filled with the Spirit that she would shout. This displeased her brother and others who were not religious that they would criticise her, saying that they did not think her shouting was sincere. On one occasion the services being held in a log dwelling (the country being new), with a large fire-place, Caroline was wonderfully blessed, and, while praising the Lord, she fell backward into the fire; her head and shoulders were enveloped in the flames. My father and others quickly took her out of the flames; to the surprise of all she had not sustained any injury. Her hair was not even singed. She was not conscious that she had been thus exposed.

In those days much was said about ghosts; and as the country was new, it was necessary that Caroline go through a dense forest for one mile, in going to church. Her brother, to frighten her, wrapped a sheet around himself and lay down in the path, rolling to and fro, with horrid groans. As Caroline discovered the object, not knowing what it was, she commenced to sing the old song, "Oh, how happy are they who their Savior obey." As she came close to the object in the path she turned out of the path and went around it, singing as she went. This was repeated on her return, but as before she commenced singing and walked by him. He succeeded in reaching home before she arrived and retired. He expected that Caroline would make some reference to the matter; but she never referred to it. So the young man felt constrained to speak of it himself. The two events of the evening had convinced him of the genuineness of his sister's religion. If the God whom Caroline served could deliver the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, he could deliver her from the fire and from any thing which might beset her way.

WAY OF STATING THINGS.

An incident connected with a revival meeting held two years before I was married illustrates the thought under consideration. A young lady residing in the community where I was conducting revival services, and a member of the Baptist Church, had been an influential worker in the meeting, especially among the young people. Not living near her own church, I thought it would be helpful to her and an inspiration to the new organization for her to connect herself with the society, at least for a while. At the first opportunity I decided to introduce the subject. Meeting her the next morning I said, "Sister Louisa, would you not like to *change your way of living?*" She paused a moment, then blushing said, "Brother Thomas, I am enjoying life quite well as I am." I at once took in the

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situation, and soberly said: "It occurs to me, if I were living where I could not go to my own church, I should unite with some other church more convenient. We should be much gratified if you would consent to cast your lot with us; we think you would be very helpful to our young people." Not being able to control her feelings longer, she laughed heartily; afterward when I would call at her father's home she would say, "Brother Thomas, would you not be glad to change your way of living?" From that time on I was careful of my language in asking questions, especially in addressing young ladies, until 1853 when I candidly asked Miss M. J. Brown, of Steuben County, Indiana, to be my wife, to which she without hesitancy answered in the affirmative.

### BE NOT FORGETFUL TO ENTERTAIN STRANGERS.

When serving a district many years ago, on my way from Columbia City to Albion, a distance of twenty-four miles, and traveling on foot, I called late one evening at the home of a class-leader five miles south of Albion, expecting to remain during the night. The father, mother, and children were seated around the table; the son was amusing himself and the family by reading an Irish tale from the "Crocket Almanac," and my entrance attracted but little attention. After waiting patiently for some time, I inquired how far it was to Albion. "Five miles," was the reply. I said, "I should be pleased to stay with you until morning, as it is too late for me to walk to Albion to-night, having already walked nineteen miles this afternoon." The old gentleman said it would not be convenient for them to keep any one. I told them I would not cause them much trouble, but the old lady insisted that they were not prepared to keep strangers. I then inquired if there were any Christian people living near.

The brother said, "We are to have our quarterly meeting to-morrow and Sabbath at Albion." "What denomina-



tion," I asked. "United Brethren," he said. I then told him that I was somewhat acquainted with that church, and as I expected to remain in Albion over the Sabbath, I would make it a point to attend the services. He then asked me my name. This was just what I did not want him to know at this time, but I answered, "My name is Thomas." "Are you the presiding elder?" "I am going to hold the quarterly meeting to-morrow and Sabbath." They were at once confused; the young lady quickly arose and asked for my hat and overcoat. She begged pardon for continuing their reading and laughing in the presence of a stranger. A good supper was soon prepared; I enjoyed a good night's rest, and the next morning the brother took me in his buggy to Albion.

On leaving, the young lady urged me to call whenever convenient, and the brother apologized for not wanting to keep me over night. I said: "My brother, after this when a man comes to your home, weary and belated on his journey, keep him and treat him kindly, as you did your humble servant." No mention was made of the affair at the meeting.

#### MAKING SURE OF A RESPECTABLE BURIAL.

At a quarterly meeting held on a circuit where there lived a local preacher who entertained me on Sabbath morning by speaking of the advantages of belonging to a number of secret orders. He stated that he was a member of four and had arranged to join the fifth. I asked why he belonged to so many. He said should he die they were bound to bury him. This was his main argument. He was a poor man, working at the carpenter's trade for \$2.50 and \$3.00 per day, paying house rent, beside supporting his family, and carrying a life insurance policy. After listening to him for an hour or more, I said: "My brother, that is a good thing; I should think a man working for \$3.00 per day, caring for a family of five, paying house

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rent, and carrying a life insurance policy would need some one to bury him and care for his family when he is dead." He gave me a rather queer look, but made no reply. I noticed that he did not seem to enjoy the service. In three months after this I held a quarterly meeting in the town where this man lived. In the meantime he had told his wife what I had said to him, and regretted that he had gone to hear me preach, and said if he could have gone away from the services he would not have stayed. His wife said to him, "I think you had better reflect upon what the elder said." At the meeting held in his own town he was not in a good state of mind, and manifested an unpleasant spirit; but on Sabbath morning he became very tender of heart, and invited me to his home for dinner. After dinner, when we were seated in the parlor, he said: "Elder, do you remember what you said to me three months ago concerning my belonging to four orders? I have thought over what you said, and the truth is my expenses have been beyond my income. I cannot provide food and clothing for my family as I desire; and after considerable reflection I then and there resolved that I would withdraw from every organization save the Odd Fellows, and now I am able to clothe all my family."

### FEELING BEFORE CONVERSION.

In 1868 I held a revival meeting in the town of North Manchester; the meeting was a great blessing to many. Among the number converted was a young lady. Before her conversion I said to her, "Are you a Christian?" "I am not," was her reply. "Were you ever a Christian?" "I never was." "Do you believe in Christianity?" "I do." "Why have you not become a Christian?" "I have never had the feeling that I thought that I should have to become a Christian." "How do you desire to feel?" "I want my heart all broken up so that I can weep freely." I said, "If you will attend to *your* business, God will attend to *his*."

At this she seemed indignant, and said, "I wish an explanation of your statement." I said: "You shall have the explanation. God, in his Word, tells you what to do to be saved; your business is to do what he tells you to do; if you need a barrel of tears to be saved, he will give you a barrel of tears." After a moment's thought she said, "I will admit that there is force in what you say." I said, "Will you go and bow at that altar and give God your heart?" She said, "I will." The next evening she came again, and had all the feeling necessary; she looked up through her tears to the Savior and believed, and the Spirit said, "Thy sins are all forgiven." She at once arose, and facing the congregation, said: "Oh, how unworthily I have been acting all these years; I have desired to be a Christian, but have been waiting for feeling." She then related what I had said to her before she went to the altar. "I thought that he was uncouth, and I asked for an explanation, which he gave, of his saying to me, 'Attend to your business, and God will attend to his.' I felt the force of his remarks; I came to this altar and was saved."

#### A CONDUCTOR SURPRISED.

Rev. Mr. Plummer, one of the early ministers of St. Joseph Conference, possessed a marvelous power to win men; hence was successful in revival work. He was a man of more than ordinary physical strength, but, withal, of a genial disposition. On his way home from one of his revival meetings, traveling on the Pittsburg Railroad, a strange conductor, but a fine-appearing man, asked Mr. Plummer for his fare. As he handed him the fare he said, "Conductor, have you religion?" The conductor, taken somewhat by surprise, said, "No, sir." "Conductor, it is too bad; you are a fine-looking man; you ought to have religion. I hope you will attend to this matter soon." The conductor refused to accept the fare, saying, "A man

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with such zeal and earnestness in his work ought to be carried free." After a time he became acquainted with Mr. Plummer, and he declared that he never formed the acquaintance of any minister for whom he had a higher regard.

### REV. MR. PLUMMER'S BREAKFAST.

In 1858 Rev. Mr. Plummer held a revival meeting in the town of B——, which was very wicked. The preacher was faithful in rebuking sin, and holding up Christ as the hope of sinful men. In his zeal he visited and prayed in nearly every home in that town. There was one home that he had not visited—at the hotel. The hotel-keeper had been offended at some plain remarks of the preacher in a sermon, and had made some threats, if he came to his home. Finally, on a certain morning, the preacher, rising early, went over to see the hotel-keeper, and met him in the bar-room, making a fire in the stove. Politely, Brother Plummer said: "Good-morning; I really owe you an apology. I have called at nearly all the homes in the village, but have neglected to call on you. I hope you will not take any offense at my neglect, and I promise you I will do better in the future. I thought I would come over and take breakfast with you this morning." After breakfast Brother Plummer excused himself, as he had other calls to make, inviting the hotel-keeper to attend his meetings as he had opportunity. "I know," said Brother Plummer, "you cannot always leave your hotel, but come when you can and make these meetings helpful to you. Oh," said he to the hotel-keeper, "you ought to be a Christian; come over and give your heart to Christ; it will do you good and help others. God bless you. Good-morning." The hotel-keeper ever after was a fast friend of Brother Plummer.

### A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

In my twenty-first year, when engaged in missionary work in the State of Michigan, a young peddler called

where I was entertained and remained over night; he was cultured and possessed rare talent. In the course of our conversation I found him to be skeptical, not believing in the authenticity of the Scriptures. After having brought forward much evidence concerning the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures, I added that we had in the Bible the best code of laws on moral ethics that was ever given to the world, and asked him to produce a better.

To my surprise he referred me to Thomas Payne's "Age of Reason." After having shown him, as I thought, the weakness of his position, about eleven o'clock we retired, he sleeping in the same bed with me. When the light was blown out, I thought I would see if I could find a tender place in his heart. I said, "Young man, tell me, was your mother a Christian?"—there is nothing that touches a man's heart like the name of mother—he made no reply, but was weeping bitterly. Finally he said: "Stranger, I had a godly mother who taught me to pray and reverence the Bible. I carry with me a Testament which my mother gave me when I bade her farewell; I love it for her sake. Believe me, sir, wicked as I am, I often retire at night when among strangers, and dare not close my eyes in slumber until I arise and bow at my bed-side and pray the prayer my mother taught me when I was a child. To be honest with you, I am not an infidel; I try to be, and might be, were it not for the life and prayer of my precious mother."

DEATH OF A CHILD—FATHER AND MOTHER SAVED.

A number of years ago, when I was holding a quarterly meeting on the Grovertown charge, where Rev. D. Showley was pastor, I called at the home of A. Uncapher, and found him and his wife sorely bereaved, a dear child had recently died. Mr. Uncapher was a shrewd business man, and had accumulated considerable wealth, and was thirst-

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ing for more, to the neglect of his soul. When Jesus took the little child to its heavenly home, and thus touched the heart of the father, who seemed to understand the design of the sad providence, he said, "The Lord will not need to take another child to get my heart."

During the Sabbath services the parents were greatly moved, and the next week, at the holiness camp-meeting, near Warsaw, they were gloriously saved. At an annual conference held at Indian Village, by their request I received them into the Church, and at the same service administered the rite of baptism. Since that time a house of worship has been erected in the town where they live, and many souls have been saved in that church. In my opinion that house of worship would not have been built had not the Savior called that dear child to live in the house of many mansions. "Where our treasures are, there our hearts be also." When our Father afflicts us, it is with a view to our happiness and his glory.

"PA, PRAY."

There lived a man by the name of Collins who was an infidel. He had a little boy about four years old who had never been to church, and being seated at the breakfast table, demanded of his father that he return thanks; it was with great difficulty that the father was able to quiet the child.

Mr. Collins being a cooper, whenever he would hit a stave, something would seem to say to him, "Pa, pray." He remained away at noon until he supposed that the family had eaten their dinner, fearing that the child would repeat his request. When he went home he found that they were waiting on him, and the little boy repeated his request with greater earnestness. In the evening he remained away again, fearing that the child would again repeat his request for his father to pray; but the family was waiting supper for him. The little boy plead in tears

that his father pray, and he could not quiet him until he had muttered over something. This produced such conviction that it never left him until he was converted. He has been a minister for a number of years, and has filled the office of presiding elder. In about two months after the father's conversion that little boy died. He lived long enough to lead his father to Christ.

COLONEL MORRISON.

In the town of R—— there lived a merchant by the name of Morrison, with whom I was well acquainted; he was taken dangerously sick. He was not in the habit of going to church except on special occasions, but was, withal, an intelligent man. The doctor finally told him that he would have to die. When he found that he could not get well, by his request a messenger came for me. When I came to his bedside I said, "Colonel, what do you desire?" He answered: "The doctor tells me that I must die; I want you to pray for me." I replied, "Colonel, why do you want me to pray for you?" He answered, "I want to be saved." I said, "Colonel, I do not think it is worth while to pray for you." He replied, "Don't you think there is any hope in my case?" "Colonel, I want to ask you a plain, candid question; I want you to answer it just as you would if you were going to stand before God to-day. If you now knew that you would not die, and would get well instantly, would you care to have me pray for you?" The tears started in his eyes, and he said, "Mr. Thomas, I don't believe I would." I said, "Colonel, it will not do any good for you simply for me to pray for that you may get to heaven and not be a Christian if you get well."

"Now, Colonel," I said, "I will tell you what I will do for you; if you will promise candidly before God that if he lets you live, you will give him the remainder of your days, I will ask for your life." In the most solemn manner he promised that he would serve him if he would allow him

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to live. While I was praying I felt that the Colonel would get well. As I arose I said: "Colonel, the Lord is going to raise you up; you will not die; you will get well." In a few days the Colonel was on the street. To my certain knowledge the Colonel could not walk without a staff after he got well; but I never saw him in church. He lived as before, a very wicked life. I never knew him to enter a church after that.

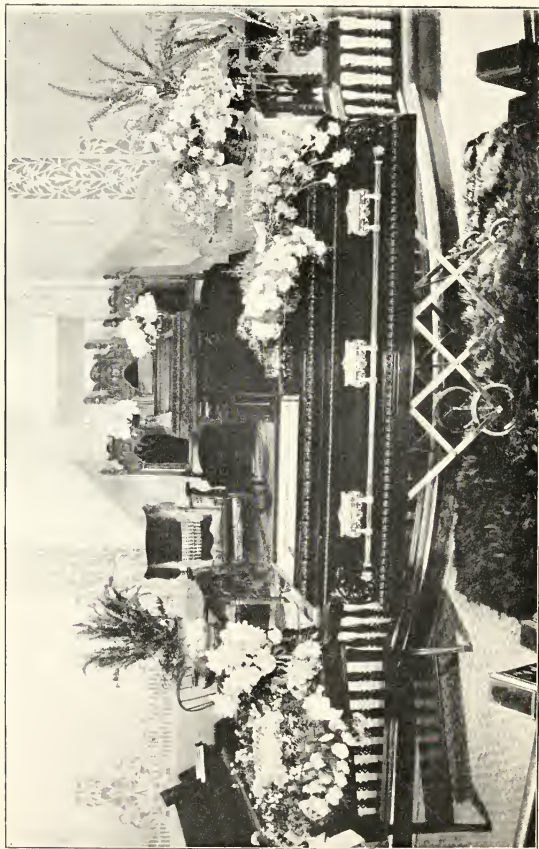
### A DESIRE TO DANCE.

A young lady, while attending one of my revival meetings, was brought under deep conviction, and expressed a desire to become a Christian. On one occasion she said to me: "I love to dance, and cannot give it up; your church would be my choice if I should join any, and you would not allow me to dance." I said, "Jane, who told you I would not allow you to dance?" "Well, I did not suppose you would." I said, "Give your heart to Christ and receive his pardoning love, then if you want to dance, do so." The next day she said to me, "Did you mean what you said, that I could dance and belong to your Church?" "Yes; be saved from sin and the love of it, then if you want to dance, you can do so."

She became so deeply convicted that she forgot the dance, and was finally converted, saved from sin, its guilt and power, and rejoiced in the victories of grace. On a certain Wednesday I said to her, "Jane, are you going to the dance to-night?" She replied, "No, I cannot." I said, "You can if you want to." She replied: "I don't want to dance; I have something better." A saved soul does not hanker after the dance. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new."







In the Church

## CHAPTER XIX

### IN MEMORIAM.

“That which is born of the Spirit will live forever.”—  
*Moody.*

“And there are joys in that world above,  
The highest and purest and best;  
How sweet the news to a weary soul,  
Of a near, eternal rest!  
Rejoice and be glad, for you it is given  
To suffer and trust, but your rest is in heaven.”  
—*Hall.*

It was a cherished hope on the part of the many friends of the author of this autobiography, Rev. F. Thomas, that the chariot of Israel would delay for him its coming, but an all-wise Providence has ordered otherwise. It was indeed very fortunate that the manuscript was almost completed at the time of the author's death. With very little exception, the entire manuscript was submitted to him for correction and approval. Reading backward, as we often do, we can now see why the author wrought with untiring energy, working late and early, that the manuscript might be completed before the sun had set.

It is indeed a busy life, a great life, that can furnish material for a printed volume worthy of publication. With too many, the events of their lives are so fragmentary and common-place that but little appears in relief to form a history.

With Mr. Thomas it was not so; his was a busy, active, fruitful life—he was “abundant in labors.” He worked in his own sphere and in his own way; his style was his

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own; therefore he merited the honored place that was accorded him in the Church and in his own conference. All the events of his ministry would furnish material for a history much larger than the one here given. He began early and toiled through the forenoon of life, then, bearing the burden and heat of the day, he entered upon the afternoon of life's weary day, and it was not until the shadow of the western hills began to fall upon his pathway that he was called from the field of toil. Then the day's work having been completed, with the sheaves he had gathered, he went home. His last sermon was preached at the Seven Mile Church, on the Logansport charge, Thursday evening, June 13, 1907, from the text, "And he was called the friend of God." James 2:23. While on the Logansport charge he was suddenly taken sick, and compelled to return to his home at North Manchester, Indiana, where he gradually grew weaker, until at length he quietly and peacefully fell asleep in Jesus at eleven o'clock Monday night, June 17, 1907, aged seventy-six years, four months, and nine days.

On Friday forenoon, June 21, the beautiful casket, containing all that was mortal of this faithful servant of God, was taken to the United Brethren Church at North Manchester, where the body lay in state until one o'clock P. M., at which time the funeral services were held.

The services were under the direction of Rev. J. L. Goshert, the pastor at North Manchester. The Arion quartet, of St. Joseph Conference, composed of Revs. E. H. Pontius, A. M. Cummins, R. G. Upson, and C. S. Parker, rendered appropriate selections. The Scripture lesson, 1 Cor. 15:1-20, was read by Rev. J. W. Lake, of Bremen. Rev. R. J. Parrett offered the following prayer:

### PRAYER BY REV. R. J. PARRETT.

O thou Source of all our blessings, thou who dost comfort our hearts in sorrow, thou who dost make the path of

life to shine with the brightness of thine own intense presence, we come to thee now filled with sorrow, to ask the divine blessing upon us, as we meet on this occasion to pay this tribute of respect to one of our fellows—one of our brothers in the gospel, one whom we have so long known. Many of us are having an untried experience at this hour, but we thank thee that “earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot cure.”

We thank thee that there is no darkness so intense that God cannot make it light; that there is no sorrow so heavy that God cannot lift the burden from our hearts. Though we are called to weep over the loss of our brother and this father in the ministry and of this conference of which we are members, yet we believe that if he could speak back from the heavenly shore he would say, “Rejoice in this hour, because of the gospel that makes men free from sin.” Many have been the sermons that have fallen from his lips, but the priceless sermon that he preaches to us now is more powerful than any to which we have listened. May the gospel that he has so long preached come with power to every troubled heart.

We thank thee that in this world for those who have fallen asleep, Jesus Christ is the resurrection, and that he came from the grave, victorious, dragging death at his chariot wheels, and that he said, “He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever believeth in me shall never die.”

O God, bless these sorrowing hearts; this wife and mother, with whom he walked through the long journey of his ministerial usefulness, who has shared with him in the work, its joys, and sorrows, and shared in the sacrifices and the trials of life. God bless Sister Thomas. Thou hast said that thou wouldst be “a father to the fatherless, and a friend to the widow”; bless these children, the sons and daughter. God bless Enos and Boyd and Annis. May the prayer that fell from the lips of this father, who now

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sleeps in death, be answered in their behalf. May these children when their journey is complete, have a place in heaven. May thy blessing rest upon the grandchildren and upon the relatives, all who are now in sorrow. Bless this local church and all the brethren in the ministry in this conference, and may we remember the lessons he has taught us. Help us to preach the gospel that makes better men, and in the end may it be ours to live on the shores immortal through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Rev. J. L. Goshert read a well-written biographical sketch on the life of the deceased, and Rev. C. H. Bell delivered a very tender and impressive sermon from the text, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Phil. 1:23. Following is a synopsis of the sermon:

### FUNERAL SERMON DELIVERED BY REV. C. H. BELL.

Text: "For I am in a strait betwixt two; having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Phil. 1:23.

I have as a subject, if I care to talk about a subject,

### "THE BELIEVER'S BETTER PORTION."

Paganism had cold comfort for its children, and this may be said of everything else beside the perfect religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the religion of the Lord Jesus which can cheer and satisfy the soul. Jesus having overcome death, the reign of the terrible destroyer is broken and his power over our mortal bodies is only for a brief season. Well may we envy the portion of those who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors. I am not surprised that the apostle Paul would say, "I am in a strait betwixt two; having a desire to depart.

WHY A DESIRE TO DEPART OUT OF THIS LIFE?

We may ask ourselves the question, Why a desire to depart out of this life? The answer would come:

1. Because it is a full release from this evil world. We have lived long enough, we have grown old enough to know that from the cradle to this moment, that life is a conflict.

2. It means the being set free after the breaking up of some long restraint, or the unyoking of the oxen wearied with the plow, or the weighing again of our anchors for a homeward voyage—"a desire to depart and to be with Christ." For the moment it might seem strange, after we have been clinging so long to this life and this world, to have a desire to depart.

3. A desire to depart and to be with Christ, because it frees from sorrow and an evil world; from the temptations and burdens that weigh upon the soul. Life means trials; life means duties. As long as there is life, there are conflicts. Like the soldier marching home, but not until the war is ended, so with the soldier of Jesus. It came to our dear brother; there was handed to him the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, come home." Then this leads to another reason why it is blessed to depart.

4. It unites us forever to the new creation of God. What is this new creation but the "new heavens and the new earth," in which are gathered the whole lineage of the second Adam, all the saints from Abel the just, of all ages and times, in the twilight and the dayspring, in the morning and the noontide of grace, all made perfect, whether on earth or in rest, by the omnipotence of love?

5. To be with Christ. "For I am in a strait"; I can hardly decide, having a desire to depart. It is better for me that I depart; to live is more needful for you, the Church. And so of the one who has gone on before, this our dear brother who lies before us. For him it is better to be with Christ, which is far better, but for him to live is more needful for the church militant, for the world, for

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wife and children. But while he is no longer with us, the real life has not gone out; it is only the candlestick broken. I thank God for this impression. Why, brethren, I don't know that you can find a single charge in St. Joseph Conference but that one or more societies on that charge Brother Thomas organized, or some brother or sister there converted through his preaching. What will be the brightness of that crown that his Savior will place upon his head?

6. To behold His presence. Won't that be a glad day when these poor eyes will behold the King in his beauty! We shall not only behold his presence, but shall live there to share his glory; that means an equal share, and to enjoy his communion. That is now our dear brother's privilege. Then to meet loved ones—this old servant of God meeting loved ones, Brothers Burton and Sickafoose, and others who have gone on before.

But I must soon close. Paul, what do you mean by "far better"? I will have a *better body* there. Here the body bears the marks of sin and affliction, but beyond this life there will be a perfect body. The house of this servant has been jostled and often weary, but there the body will be perfect. But, ah! better company, how glad we are for our company! But think of Brother Thomas' company now. Then better enjoyments, far better because there is no sorrow there; the war is ended, the saint of God is home at last.

Before I close, I would like to leave this last benediction: Servant of God, thy warfare o'er; home at last, to be with Jesus. We will met you in the morning.

Following the sermon, short addresses were delivered by Revs. W. F. Parker and R. J. Parrett.

The large attendance, and especially of the ministry, was an expression of the esteem in which he was held. Before placing the casket in the hearse, the accompanying photograph was taken.



About fifty of the ministers marched in a body to the Oak Lawn Cemetery, at North Manchester, where the remains with tender hands were laid to rest.

The burial service was read by Rev. J. L. Goshert, and Rev. C. H. Bell offered prayer.

But little more need be said in conclusion. The long, useful life of Rev. F. Thomas has been a great blessing and inspiration to the United Brethren Church, and especially the St. Joseph Conference. Through the years of his ministry he did much to make this conference what it is to-day.

Called of God to the work of the ministry, he gave himself fully to the work. He came forth at a time when men of courage, stability, loyalty, and fidelity were needed. It was no time for place-seekers. The small salaries then offered, together with the hardships of that day, offered but little inducement to enter the ministry. The chief consideration was success—"souls for their hire." He "conferred not with flesh and blood"; he entered into the work and toiled as only a faithful, consecrated servant of God could toil.

As an evangelist he was successful in a marked degree. Possibly there was no place in the work of the ministry where he was more at home than in a great revival. He knew how to *promote a revival*, even under trying and discouraging circumstances. This was evidenced in the great awakening at Roanoke in 1872. He was especially gifted in prayer, and knew the source of power and how to trust in God.

As a preacher he was clear, logical, and forcible, even eloquent at times. While he frequently used outlines of his sermons to guide his thought, he learned well the art of "thinking on his feet." Following is a sketch of one of his sermons:

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, OR A TRUE DISCIPLE.

Text: "Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name." Ps. 86: 11.

## Life and Labors of

In the expressions "teach," "fear," "walk," we have religion presented to us in three aspects—knowledge, feeling, and conduct. In other words, religion in the *head*, in the *heart*, and in the *feet*.

Religion affects the whole circle of man's activity; as knowledge it illumines his intellect or guides his thinking in relation to those matters of which it takes cognizance; as feeling it awakens right promptings within him, in relation to those matters; in conduct it furnishes rules for his doing.

### I. RELIGION IS A MATTER SUBJECT TO KNOWLEDGE; A PROCESS OF INSTRUCTION.

1. *The teacher is the Lord*: "Teach me thy way, O Lord." Religious illumination comes from God, the Father of lights. He graciously assumes the character of teacher of men in the way of salvation. To this end he has provided for them a great text-book, which is no other than the Bible. When we read this Book, we sit in effect, like Mary of old, at the feet of the divine Teacher, to learn his way.

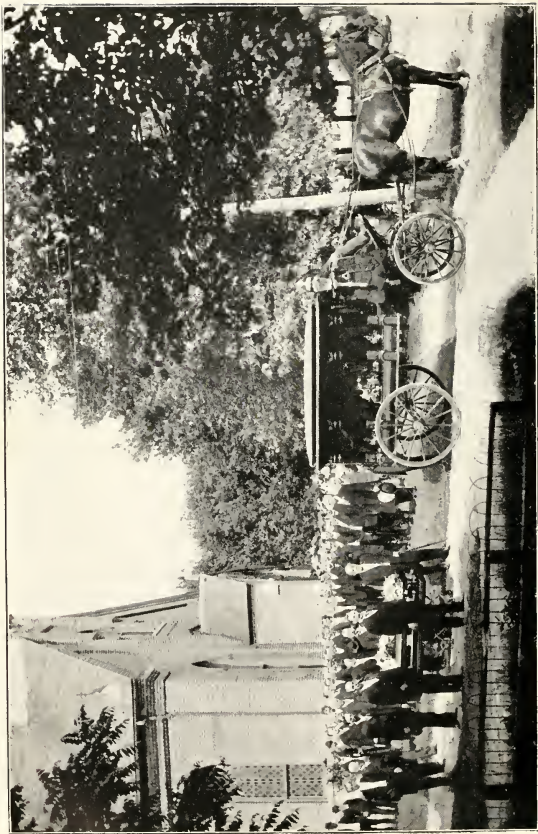
2. *The learner is man*. Man displays the first essential of a true learner, a keen desire for his lesson. The scholar casts himself at the feet of his divine Teacher and asks to be taught. Meekness and fear, docility and reverence are qualities in the pupil which unlock the secret of the divine heart.

### II. RELIGION IN THE HEART, OR RELIGION AS A MATTER OF FEELING.

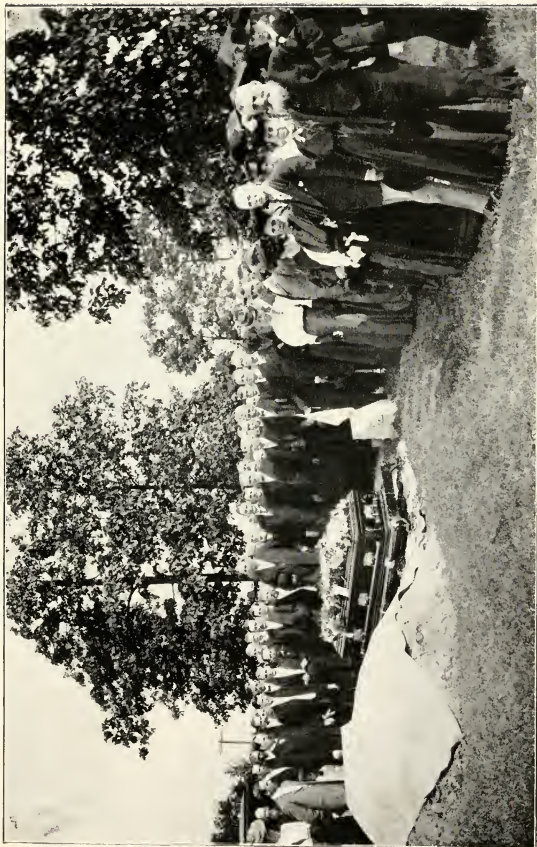
1. *Religion has made its way from the head to the heart*. From the light of knowledge, it has become the warmth of emotion. The particular emotion into which knowledge develops is fear.

2. *This is not fear in the sense of terror or dismay, but of love*. It is heart feart, not conscience fear. It is the





Leaving the Church



At the Grave



child-disposition, sweet, trustful, and penetrated with holy, subduing reverence.

3. *The condition of its development.* The essential condition of this beautiful disposition is a heart at peace with all its passions, in thorough harmony with itself.

4. *Religion in the life, or as a matter of conduct.* Divine truth is first light in relation to men. This truth or light received into the hearts of men, becomes converted into love, and this love becomes a mighty propelling force, impelling them irresistibly along the line of truth and righteousness.

In his younger days he possessed a clear, strong, musical voice, which he consecrated to God and used to a good purpose, especially in singing the old revival songs.

As a presiding elder, in which office he served for a period of thirty-six years, he was kind yet firm, and ruled in harmony with his convictions of right. It might be truthfully said of him that he would not allow any one "to rule his conscience." He was the pastor's friend; no journey was too long, no day or night too cold to prevent him from attending his quarterly meetings when his health would permit. Being eminently successful in revival work, he often rendered valuable assistance to pastors in their revivals.

As a friend he was kind and true, yet willing to give needed counsel. While he was often plain and positive, his words were nevertheless seasoned with grace; he had the ability to speak plainly without giving offense. He could "reprove and rebuke with all longsuffering and doctrine," and it would "yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness." He believed that "open rebuke is better than secret love." He possessed the courage of his convictions. This possibly was never more clearly seen than during the War of the Rebellion, when he had an opportunity to speak in defense of the Union.

## Life and Labors of

Although not having had the advantage of a classical and theological training, he had gathered a large fund of knowledge especially adapted to the work of the ministry. He was a student of theology and could clearly define the leading doctrines of the Bible, which enabled him to teach and preach with clearness and confidence.

In his religious life he lived and walked with God, hence his life was not mercurial, but even. This gave him influence at home and abroad. With him Christianity was not a theory, but a life, the "fruit of the Spirit."

And now that his Christian race is run, it may be said of him that he "fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith," and although he has passed from the church militant to the church triumphant, he "yet speaketh," and his influence will long continue in this conference. Doubtless many are now in heaven who were led to Christ through his preaching; hundreds are walking up the shining way whom he pointed to the Lamb of God. Young men in the ministry will rise and call him blessed; young men and women in the laity will pour forth their words of praise for the help and encouragement they received from him; old men will cherish his memory and will seek to walk in his footsteps, that they may live with him at last in the house of many mansions; and children will long remember the name of "Father Thomas." His picture holds an honored place in many homes; the sketch of his life will be read with interest by many with whom he walked and talked when on earth. When he found that his life work was drawing to a close, he desired to send forth this volume, that it might accomplish good in the world in leading souls to Christ and encourage ministers and believers in their work.

May we pause a moment and ask reverently, "Upon whom will his mantle fall?" Oh, where is the man or young man whose heart and hands and life are so pure as to be worthy to take up his mantle and wear it?



Servant of God, well done;  
Rest from thy loved employ;  
The battle fought, the vict'ry won,  
Enter thy Master's joy.

The voice at midnight came;  
He started up to hear;  
A mortal arrow pierced his frame,  
He fell, but felt no fear.

Tranquil amid alarms  
It found him on the field,  
A vet'ran slumbering on his arms,  
Beneath his red-cross shield.

The pains of death are past,  
Labor and sorrow cease;  
And, life's long warfare closed at last,  
His scul is found in peace.

Soldier of Christ, well done,  
Praise be thy new employ;  
And, while eternal ages run,  
Rest in thy Savior's joy.

—*Montgomery.*

*J. W. Lower*









